



Inside

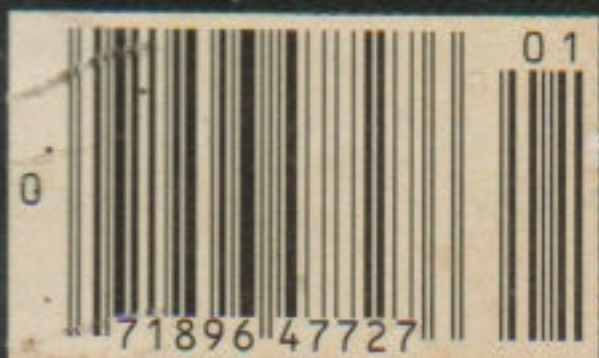
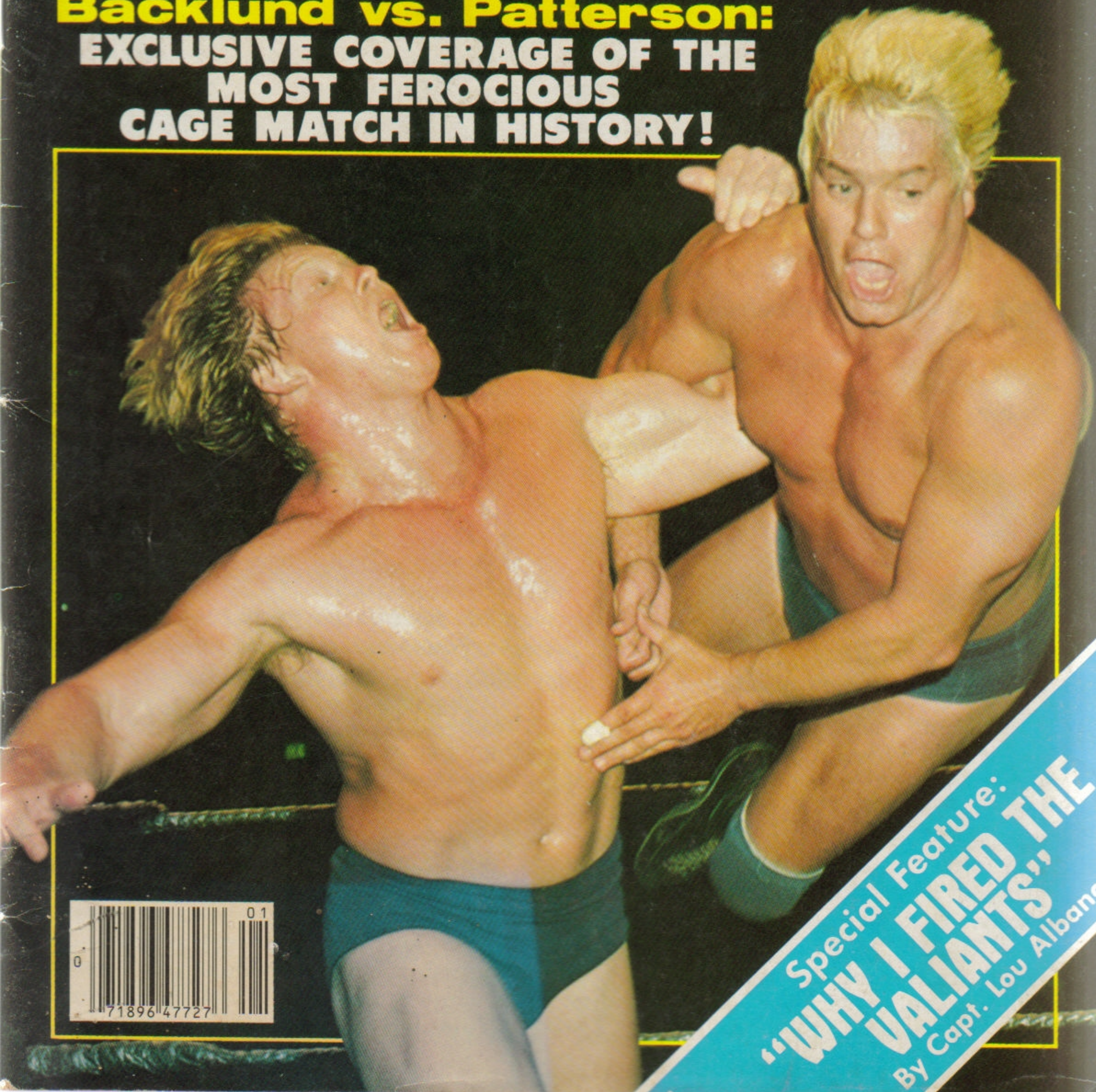
TERRY FUNK: "WHY YOU SHOULD LOVE ME AND HATE DUSTY RHODES"

January 1980

47727 \$1.25

Wrestling

Backlund vs. Patterson:
EXCLUSIVE COVERAGE OF THE
MOST FEROCIOUS
CAGE MATCH IN HISTORY!



Special Feature:
"WHY I FIRED THE
VALIANTS,"
By Capt. Lou Albano

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Peter
King

Editor-in-Chief

When a wrestler retires, often his bad deeds seem to magically vanish from the public's memories. No matter how cruel or vicious this man was during his grappling days, once he stops competing only pleasant memories of him remain.

This is how a man who was noted for brutality becomes remembered for "his exciting style." Or how a wrestler who ruthlessly crippled opponents sparks memories of being an "aggressive competitor."

Perhaps this is why Buddy Rogers was given a hero's welcome on his return to wrestling. Memories of his brutal wrestling style were softened by thoughts of the Golden Age of Wrestling--an age in which Rogers was the sport's brightest star. Anybody who dared suggest that Rogers was a terrible man was shouted down by cries of "Buddy's changed" or "Give him some time."

Well, for a few weeks anyway, Rogers showed the fans he could wrestle scientifically. And everyone forgot the man's ugly past. He was accepted as a fan favorite, no questions asked.

Now everyone knows the truth about Rogers. He is an evil, vile human being. He can no more change his style than an alligator can learn to sing opera.

Here is a brief list of what Rogers has done since his return to wrestling: He has turned Jimmy Snuka, a great scientific favorite, into a bloodlusting maniac; He has sneak-attacked Rick Steamboat on at least three occasions; He has vowed to turn Blackjack Mulligan and Ric Flair back into rulebreakers; He has become the most hated man in the history of Mid-Atlantic wrestling. And remember, all this occurred in less than three months!

Next time a wrestler retires, don't forget about his past.

'TOP SECRET'

Behind the Dressing Room Door

by Stu
Saks



LET ME TELL you, things can get rather dull in the Madison Square Garden dressing room before the start of a wrestling card. Managing editor Bill Apter and I always arrive early to snap some photographs and grab some interviews. But after that's all done, it's mostly a lot of standing around and taking drinks from the water fountain.

Oh, but not last month. Last month I found something to keep me occupied. But I almost lost my life at the same time.

There she was, just sitting there in the dressing room corridor looking as bored as I was. She was an incredibly beautiful woman. Mid-twenties, blonde hair, beautiful face, a Charlie's Angels figure. I knew I had to talk to her. All I needed was an opening line.

I went over and took a drink from the water fountain. I needed time to think of something to say.

When I turned in her direction again, I noticed that she was thumbing through the latest copy of *INSIDE WRESTLING*. My break! I walked over slowly and sat beside her on the bench.

"Oh, I see you've got the latest issue of *INSIDE WRESTLING*?" (How's that for a classy opening?)

"Yes," she said, "it's quite good." (She was referring to the magazine, not my line.)

Fortunately, she was quite talkative.

"I work for 'La Vie,' a brand new woman's magazine and I've been assigned to do an article on professional wrestling. I'm waiting for a wrestler to come out of the dressing area so I could do an interview. I'm kind of nervous . . . Oh, my name is Elizabeth."

"I'm Stu. Pleased to meet you." I gently shook her hand as I gazed

(Continued on page 48)

THE INSIDER

By STEVEN FARHOOD

SCOOP OF THE MONTH

Ernie Ladd will retire from wrestling by mid-1980! I just confirmed this incredible rumor after a long telephone conversation with "The Big Cat."

"I can't take it any more," the behemoth said. "Steve, I want you to tell the people that I've had enough of this crummy, ugly business. Too many young cowards runnin' around ruinin' my sport. After watchin' these baby yellow-bellies like Rich, DiBiase, and Brunzell, I'm through. There's no place in wrestling for a genius of my class and royalty. The king is saying, 'later' to this slimy business."

But why such a sudden change in the rulebreaker's attitude? Ladd has not declined as an athlete. His record remains awesome.

"Lemme tell ya 'bout it, Stevie boy," he continued. "I found a real nice little place, sort of a Garden of Eden, down in South America. It's in the mountains, daddy, in the mountains they call the Andes.

"I found a little spot, couldn't hold more than 100 people. I think in Argentina. Anyway, I can bring all my money there and live in peace. The natives realize my greatness. They will work as my slaves. All I will do is read the novels of James Joyce and get off on that mountain air.



The life, daddy, the real life."

Amazing, but true. Ladd seems sincere. I've heard him lie (most of the time) and I've heard him preach the truth (rarely). He meant what he told me on the phone.

I know there are thousands of fans who will rejoice and dance in the streets when Ernie Ladd leaves wrestling. There are also dozens of wrestlers who will have reason to celebrate. But the squared circle won't be the same without the dangerous number 99 patrolling with his unique brand of violence. I hope you change your mind, Big Cat. Some of us out here still appreciate you.

INSIDE WRESTLING has learned that Ernie Ladd will hang up the boots in the mid-'80s. He feels that the sport is below him now.

RUMOR VS. FACT

RUMOR: Las Vegas entertainment impresario Jerry "Hotchacha" Chessler has offered Dusty Rhodes \$500,000 for a one-week engagement as a hotel night club act! Dusty would sing, dance, and do impersonations of wrestling rulebreakers.

FACT: Rhodes has been flooded with night club offers for several years. Producers in Hollywood, Las Vegas, and New York realize his tremen-

(Continued on page 48)

Body Slams & Pinfalls

By Dan Shocket

THERE IS NO one to blame. There is only sorrow for what might have been.

When John and Jerry Valiant joined manager Lou Albano, it seemed we would be entering a new golden era in tag team wrestling. This superb duo flowered under the guidance of a brilliant manager. No one was surprised when their combined efforts resulted in earning the WWF tag team title. It seemed no one could stop them.

No one could. The tragedy of the Valiant brothers is that they may destroy themselves.

Everyone cites the Albano run-in incident as the beginning of the end, but that was only the tip of the iceberg. (A full account of this incident is described in this issue, written by Albano himself). The real reasons behind the flare-up and probable disintegration of the alliance are far more complex than a proud Albano will admit.

To understand fully, we first must understand the

Valiants. In their world, there are only Valiants and people you don't trust. Even Albano, whose history with the Valiants goes back years, has never been admitted to the family's inner circle. As Jim Valiant once said, "I've got my brothers. I don't need anyone else. A wrestler can't afford to be friendly with those he doesn't need."

Lou Albano fit in with

the brothers because he, too, needs no man. While he and the Valiants may appear friendly in public, in reality their partnership was strictly business. As such, they were incredibly successful.

Yet, they are all willful men. The Valiants believe they know what's best for themselves. Albano believes he knows what's best for his teams. Sooner or later, they had to clash.

Neither the Valiants nor Albano wanted this rift. Still, it was almost inevitable. As Albano said in a quieter moment, "I'll take the Valiants over any other team. A manager can expect to see maybe 75 percent of what he devises actually executed by his team. With the Valiants, I've seen my plans reach perfection. Perfection! I should be the happiest manager alive. I'm not. Somehow, they stick to my plans exactly but I don't feel right about it. It's like they devour my ideas and make them their own. I can't understand it. I damn well don't like it!"

(Continued on page 52)



The Valiants, John (kneeling) and Jerry, are uneasy about the fact that they are at their best with Albano, not on their own.

NAMES MAKI

GREG VALENTINE hopes to return to the Mid-Atlantic area soon with one purpose in mind—to persuade RIC FLAIR to return to the “rulebreaking fraternity.”

In an exclusive interview, Valentine said, “Ric needs some guidance at this point in his career. I hope I can steer him in the right direction so he can assist me with breaking the legs of guys like RICK STEAMBOAT and that traitor BLACKJACK MULLIGAN. I have already contacted my good friend JIMMY SNUKA and his manager BUDDY ROGERS and



GREG VALENTINE

they’re hoping they might even be able to help me bring Ric back to his senses.”

By the way, KEN PATERA has lost his Mid-Atlantic title to JIM BRUNZELL. However, Patera claims he *gave* the championship to Jim “on a silver platter.”

“I didn’t need that hunk of tin,” he added. “All I am interested in is BOB BACKLUND and that World Wrestling Federation belt



EDDY MANSFIELD

around his puny waist. Backlund, I am after your belt—and your life, too, buddy. You’re finished!”

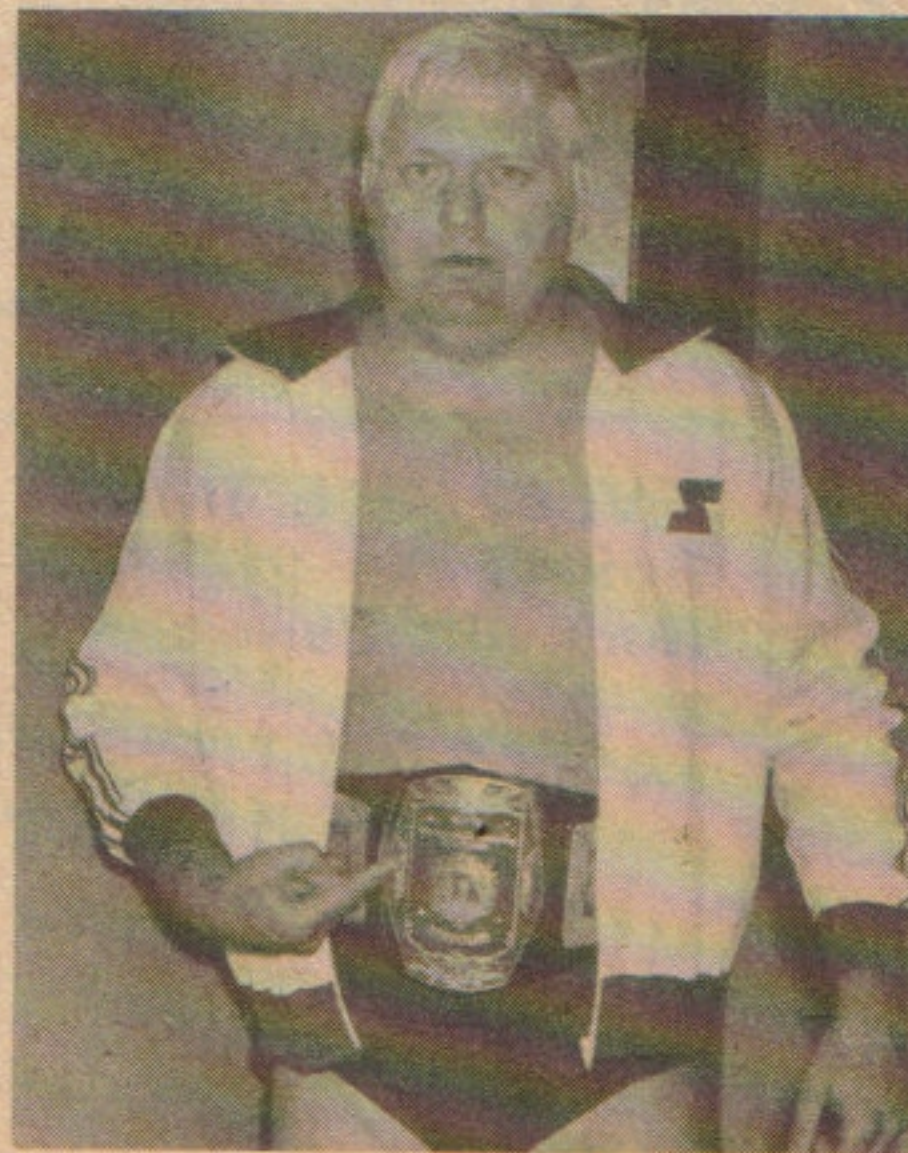
BRUISER and THE SHEIK are back at war with each other in Detroit. The two had teamed on occasion recently but just couldn’t keep it going. Their hatred is much stronger for each other than it is for any team they faced . . . “Continental Lover” EDDY MANSFIELD wants to be rated number one in a new category. He suggests we add to our ratings “Most Beautiful Wrestlers.” Modest guy, isn’t he!

MR. WRESTLING II has a new mission: He wants to rid Georgia of BOBBY HEENAN. “The man is a disease,” II says. “He spreads his sick mindless germs all over the wrestling scene here in Georgia. Well I’m gonna find a cure and get

rid of this germ once and for all!”

DICK MURDOCH says he is being “shafted” by the National Wrestling Alliance. “They ain’t give me a title match against HARLEY RACE since I gave him a good whuppin’ some time ago,” he says. “There has got to be a reason.” An NWA spokesman told us when Dick deserves another title shot—they’ll be the first to let him know! . . . THE SAMOANS are headed to the WWF. We hear they’re after the tag team championship and are talented enough to capture it . . . “Big Cat” ERNIE LADD is in Georgia and is making life miserable for Tommy RICH. Ladd sneak attacks Rich during Tommy’s matches almost on a regular basis. “I have two guys I have to watch out for,” Tommy points out, “my opponent and Ladd. It’s damn hard concentrating on my opponent when I have got to worry about Ladd jumping in and attacking me.” Tommy has got one *big* problem on his hands!

JESSE VENTURA is climbing the AWA ratings ladder . . . AWA



DICK MURDOCH

N' NEWS

Bill Apter
reporting...



MARK LEWIN

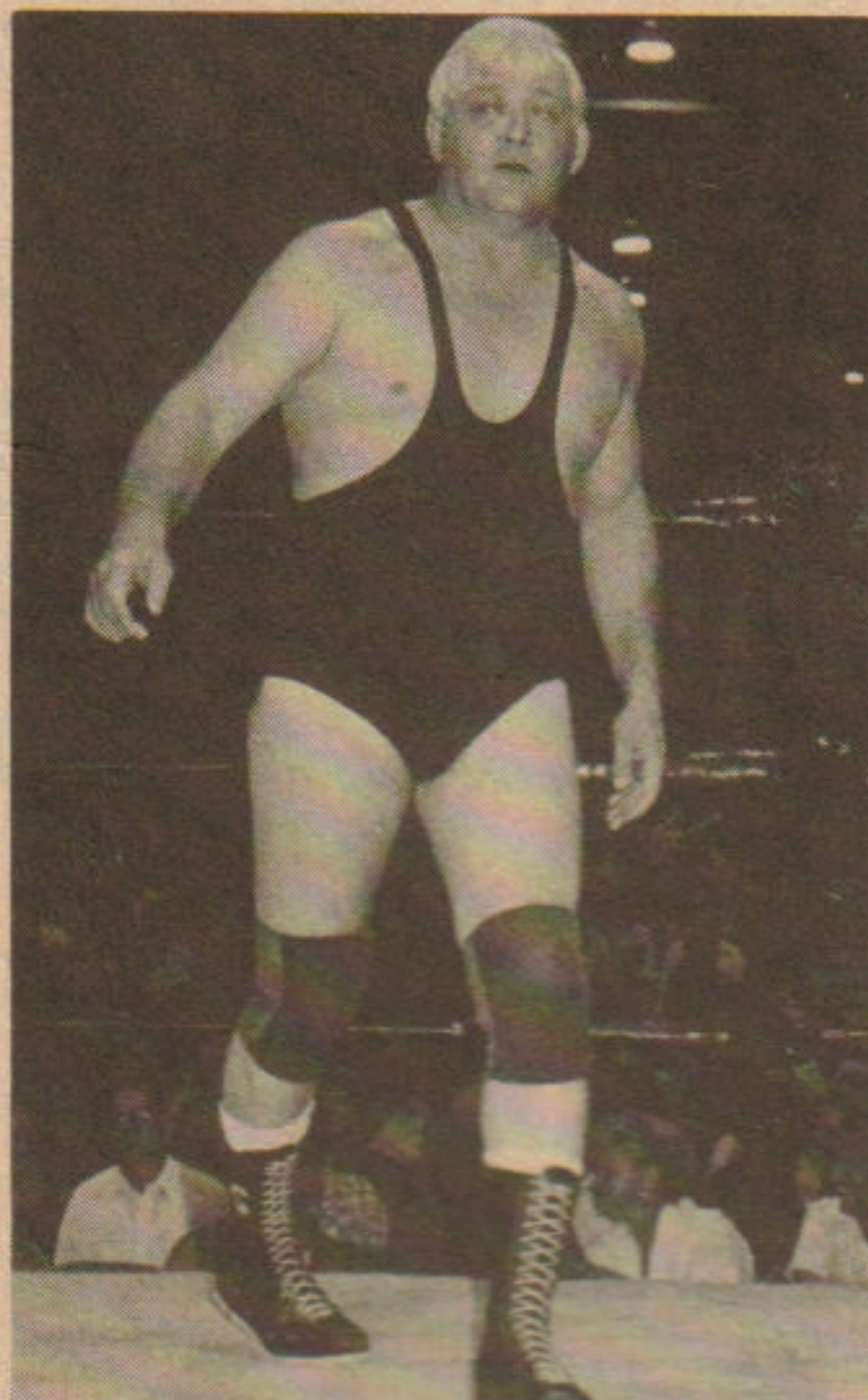
champion NICK BOCKWINKEL is negotiating with Japanese promoters, hoping for a stint in Japan... The bloody war between MARK LEWIN and TOR KAMATA continues in Texas... DAVID and KEVIN VON ERICH, along with brother KERRY, are mapping out a world tour... CAPTAIN LOU ALBANO says he is happier now that the VALIANT BROTHERS are "not my problem."

Negotiations have been started regarding a possible match between DUSTY RHODES and WWF champion BOB BACKLUND. No details yet but we'll keep you posted. We can tell you that the possibilities of this match are quite good as there is a man with a lot of financial backing willing to pay whatever it costs to get the match signed.

TONY ATLAS left the WWF after a brief visit and has returned to the Mid-Atlantic area... BOBBY DUNCUM is calling BRUNO SAMMARTINO yellow. "The guy is chicken to rattle me," Duncum claims. "I beat him so

many times, he shakes like a leaf whenever he hears my name mentioned!"... MIL MASCARAS says he has a shocking announcement that he will reveal to the world in about a month or so. There is a tight lid on this one as no one on our staff could find out what it is.

The unusual duo of RAY STEVENS and MIKE GRAHAM have taken the Florida tag team title from MR. HITO and MR. SAKURADA as this issue went to press. The reason I call the Stevens-Graham team unusual is that Ray is a noted rulebreaker and Mike is a real good clean scientific star. MR. HATORI, manager of the Japanese duo, reports that Stevens and Graham wrestled viciously and took the belts illegally. "Stevens has taught Graham what it is like to be a real rulebreaker," Hatori says. "But he didn't have to teach him too much



RAY STEVENS

because we all know Graham is a dirty sneaky rulebreaker anyway, don't we!"

Another great team to talk about is the pair of IVAN PUTSKI and TITO SANTANA. Their styles complement each other and big things are coming their way... SIR OLIVER HUMPERDINK



SANTANA & PUTSKI

is now the manager of BUGSY McGRAW... PAMPERO FIRPO is looking great in his recent Michigan outings... STAN HANSEN is back to using his "lariat" on a full-time basis. Says Stan, "Some of these dudes in Georgia need their necks broken. There's no holdin' back with my lariat anymore!"

That's all for now. See you next month! □



HAS TOMMY RICH SHOWN THE WORLD HOW TO DEFEAT HARLEY RACE?

HIS FRIEND HAD a weekend pass, so they met for beers at the local tavern. "You don't know how much I appreciate this," the wrestler said to the Marine lieutenant.

"Hey," the lieutenant said, raising his mug, "if it means that you can knock off that Race cat, I think it's worth the risk."

The wrestler's name is Tommy Rich. The lieutenant shall remain anonymous. Certainly, he would not remain lieutenant very long if the Marine Corps was aware of what he and Rick were doing.

"One more for the road and

we split?" the lieutenant asked Rich.

"It's your show, buddy," replied Rich. "I'm ready when you are."

Rich threw a couple of dollars on the bar and followed his friend out the door.

It was a short walk to Neil's Gym on George Street. The lieutenant knocked three times on the door and it was opened by a 6-5 muscleman, who left the building as he let the two men in. "Thanks, Frank," the lieutenant said.

Except for the two men, the
(Continued on page 50)

Few wrestlers sparkle with the promise of Tommy Rich. Down in Georgia, he has been enduring a veritable trial by fire and water as he struggles toward the championship. Yet Rich demonstrated startling brilliance in a recent match against Harley Race

HOTSEAT

TERRY FUNK:

"WHY YOU SHOULD LOVE ME AND HATE DUSTY RHODES"

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED
BY MATT BROCK

HE WAS ONCE NWA champion. Of all the figures of the past 10 years, he has been among the most controversial wrestlers. If anything, his trademark is his fierce independence. He takes no backtalk. He will permit no compromising of his rugged principles. He does what he wants to do and ignores the consequences. He doesn't care what his fellow wrestlers say. He doesn't care what the press says. He doesn't care what the fans say. He is his own man, pure and simple. He is Terry Funk.

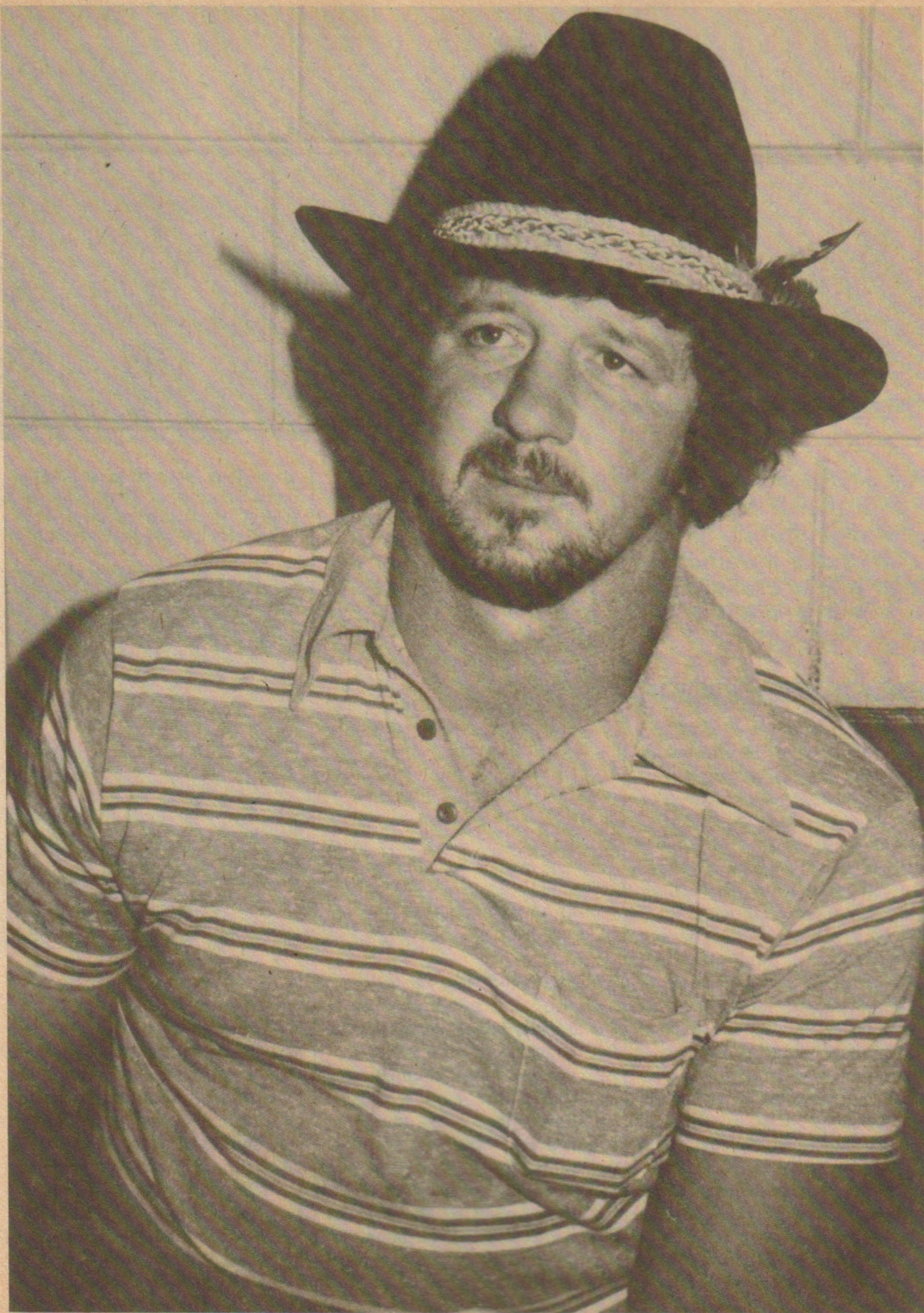
“

He says he's from Texas. Bunk. He may be from Texas but he deserted his home state. Real Texans don't do that. Cowards like Dusty Rhodes desert their home.

”

Q: Terry, we've got a lot to say.
A: Hey, I haven't seen you in a long time, Brock.
Q: I was at the last Rhodes-Race match.

A: So was I.
Q: Want to talk about it?
A: What?
Q: The attack on Rhodes.
A: Hey, old man, don't put it like that.
Q: How would you expect it to be put? You ran into the ring and attacked Rhodes with your belt. You broke his arm. You can't deny that.
A: I'm leaving. (Rises)
Q: Go.
A: No, not without responding to you, old man. (Sits)
Q: So?
A: I did what I had to do. I don't like Dusty Rhodes. For one thing, he's a liar.





“

Race has lost his guts. I'll concede he once had courage, but no more. The years have taken their toll, wrestling night after night.

”

Q: What about?

A: He says he's from Texas. Bunk. He may be from Texas, but he deserted his home state. Real Texans don't do that. Cowards like Dusty Rhodes desert their home. Cowards like Dusty Rhodes have to use weapons to fight instead of their bare hands. Rhodes is a disgrace to the honorable name of Texas and I want to distinguish between true Texans like the Funks and garbage like Rhodes.

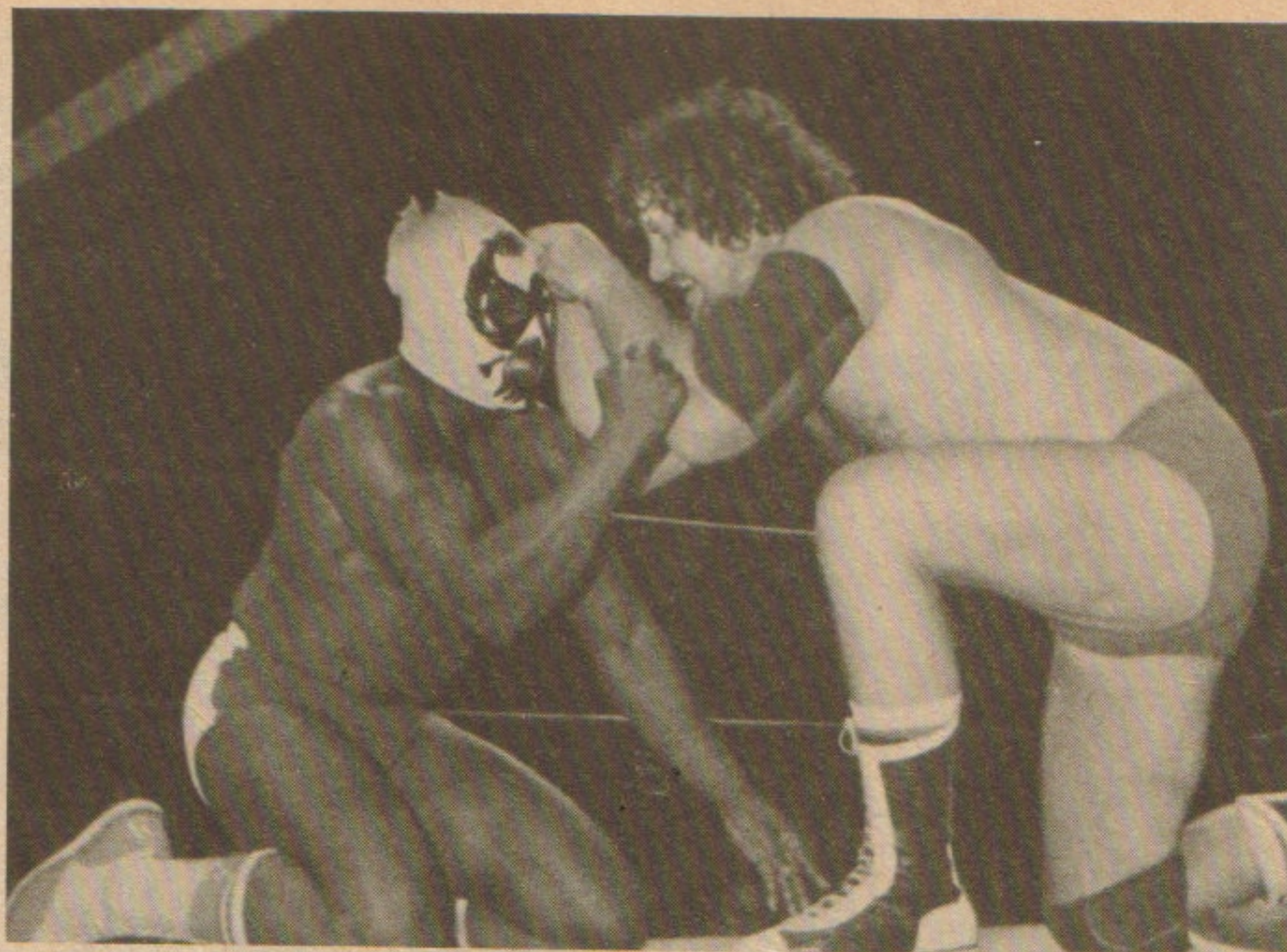
Q: Is that why you did it?

A: I protected the honor of Texas.

Q: By attacking Rhodes with a belt?

A: Hey, Brock, wanna see me protect the honor of Texas on you?

Q: Save your breath, Funk. You want an interview or you want to play games?



A: Revenge is also a Texan's point of honor. Rhodes has bad-mouthed my people. He has disgraced the title, for as little as he could hold it. How long did he have it, five days, something like that? What a joke! When a Texan wins a title, he holds it. That's why you should love me and hate Dusty Rhodes. A traitor and coward like Rhodes hasn't the guts or constitution to keep the belt.

Q: But Race wasn't pleased with your act of revenge, either.

A: Harley Race is slow, man. You help a guy out and he climbs on your case. Shows his lack of character. Race is a dull-wit. Here I risk my butt to . . .

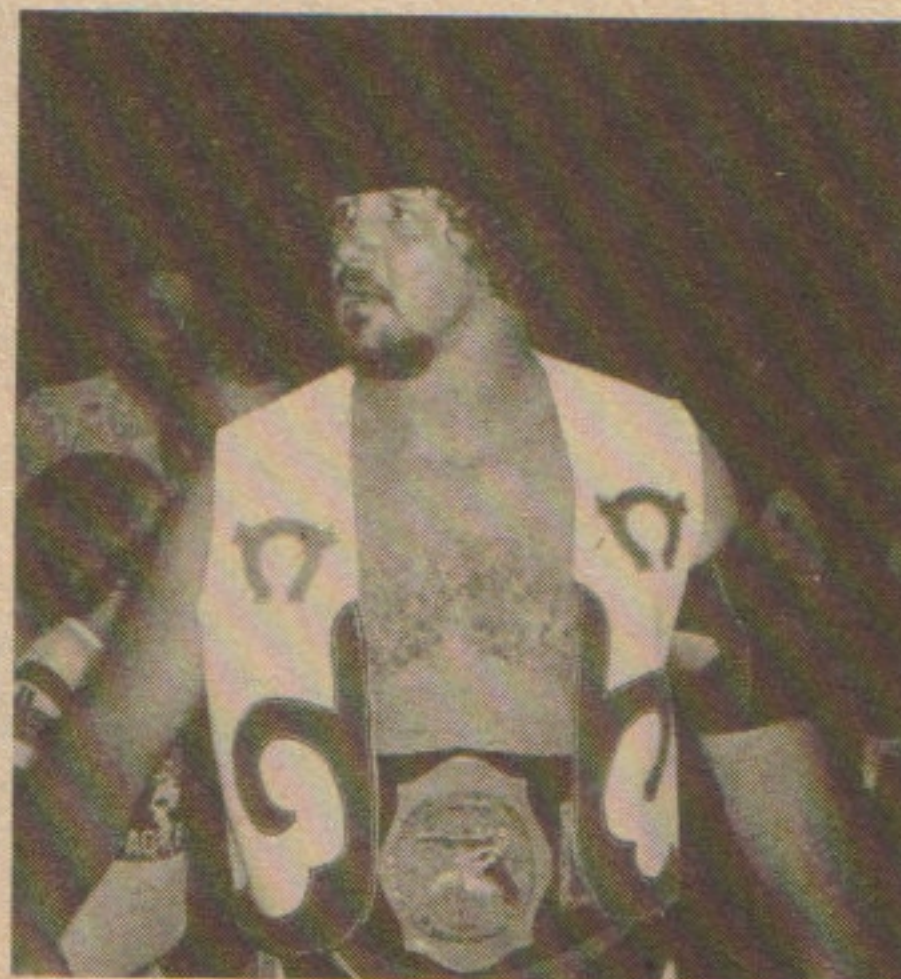
Q: Did you do this for him?

A: No, I didn't do it for Race.

Q: So why should he appreciate your efforts?

A: Because the chump's the champ. Race has lost his guts. I'll concede he once had courage, but no more. The years have taken their toll, wrestling night after night. Holding on to the belt requires a lot and you damn well better have staying power. Race is all worn down. He's afraid. You can see it in his

Above: Terry Funk tries to remove Sweet Brown Sugar's mask. Below: Terry is not content to be Florida champion. He feels he deserves the NWA heavyweight title.



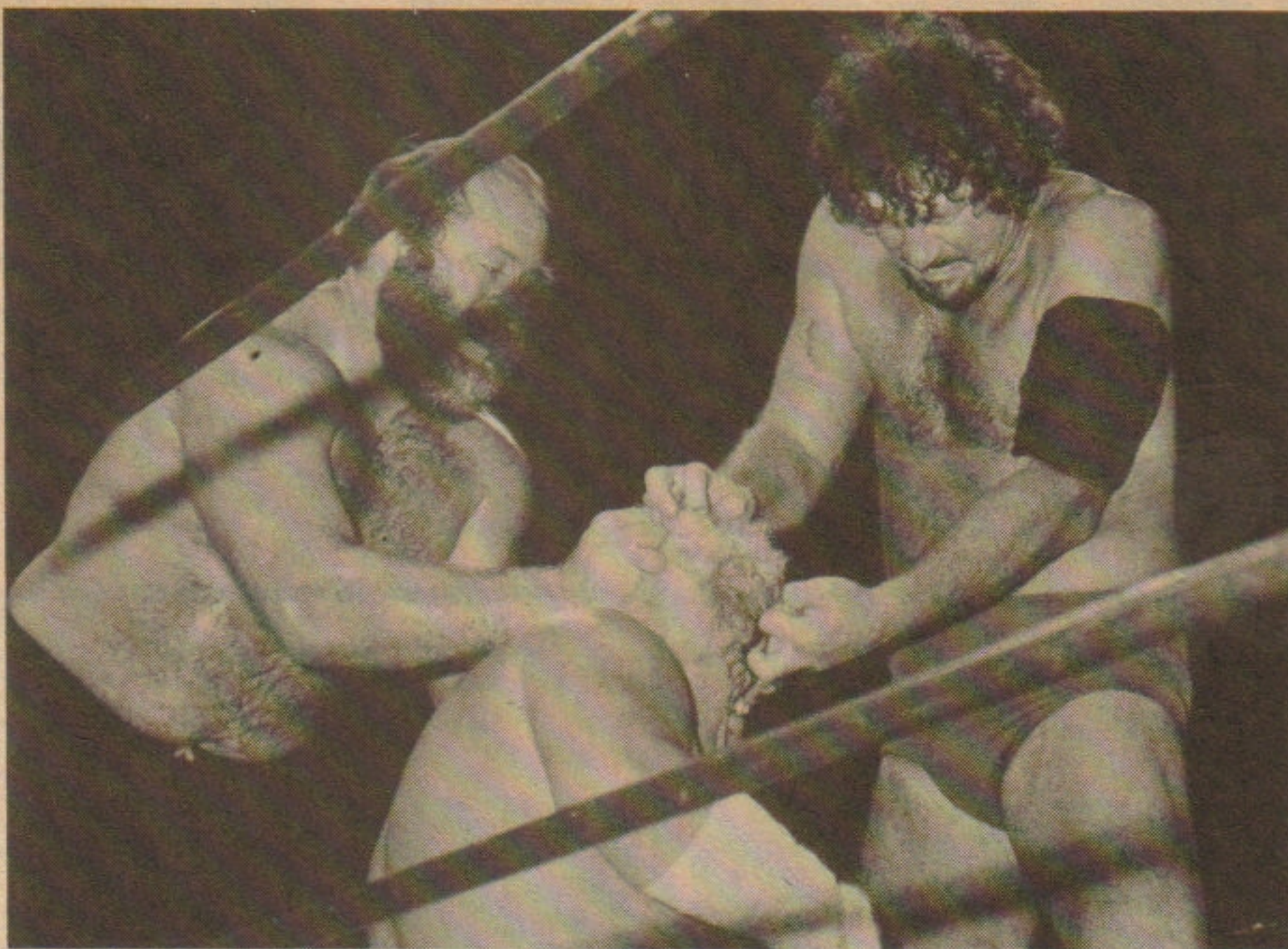
eyes. Race is over-the-hill.

Q: How would you rate the current wrestlers?

A: Soft.

Q: How so?

A: People ain't willing to get down to it and fight for what they believe in. Too many are worried about their image. Hah, image. Your image should be the reflection in the mirror every night. That's the only image you should worry about. And then they worry about the press and fans. What does it matter? No fan gets into the ring and gets his face knocked from



Above: Terry Funk rips at Dusty Rhodes' eyes while his partner, Bugsy McGraw, holds Dusty's hair. Below: Terry lies on the mat in a pool of blood after a Texas bullwhip match. Terry Funk is directly responsible for ending Dusty's title reign after five days.



here to India and back. We do.
Q: Is it so easy to shrug off the flack?

A: Course not. I'd be lying if I said otherwise. It bothers you some when people criticize you. But you can't let it influence you. A wrestler has to do what he feels is right. No one can make the decision for you.

Q: How did you go about deciding to jump into the ring that night in Orlando?

A: I didn't.

Q: What do you mean you didn't?

A: I just acted. Intellectual mush-heads think and plot and plan. All they end up doing is beating the air with their useless words. A Texan acts, period and pronto, buster. I felt I had to do it and I did.

Q: You proud?

A: Damn straight I'm proud. Why shouldn't I be?

Q: Some people would call it a cowardly act.

A: Them *people* don't have men like Race and Brisco crawling



“

I want the title back. It's obvious to anyone with a little sense that I'm the best in the NWA. Fatso Rhodes ain't got the stayin' power to hold it, that's for sure.

”

upside their backs. Those people don't have to fend off cheap shots and disarm cowards who bring foreign objects into the ring. Those people you talk about don't have a great and glorious family tradition to uphold.

Q: That sums up your feelings for critics.

A: Guess so.

Q: What's next for Terry Funk?

A: I want the title back. It's obvious to anyone with a little sense that I'm the best in the NWA. Fatso Rhodes ain't got the stayin' power to hold it, that's for sure. And Race is sliding faster and faster downhill. The Briscos are bums and the new kids ain't got it inside. Who's left but Terry Funk and, of course, Dory Jr.

Q: Terry, thanks for the interview.

A: Anytime, Brock. □

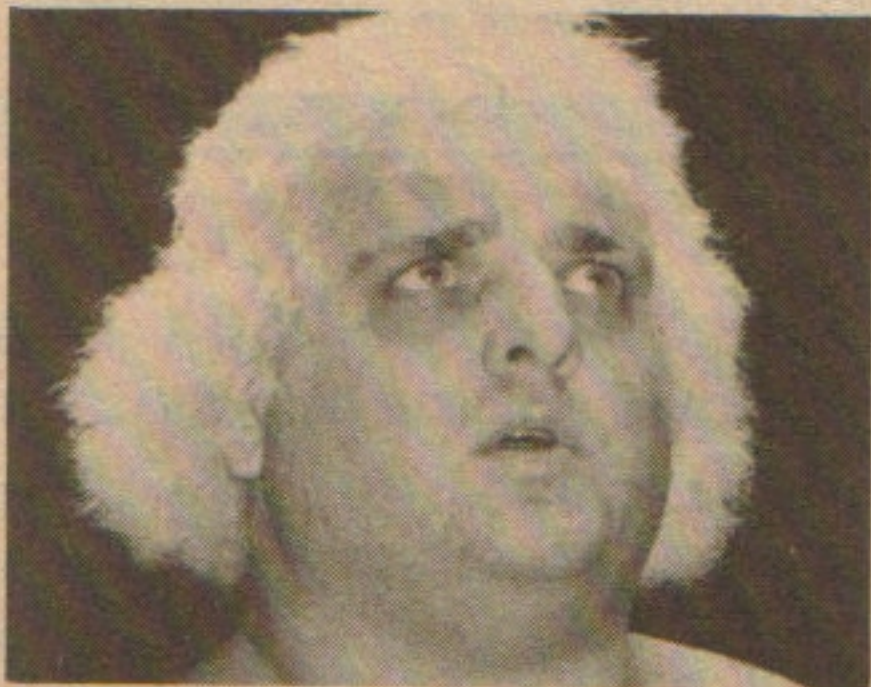
NEWS FROM THE

If you would like your area of the country represented in these reports, while also being officially credited with your own by-line, send us reports of the matches you attend. You will have the thrill of seeing your name in an internationally known magazine while at the same time helping to improve the quality of wrestling in your area. So why not give it a try? You will be glad you did!

Send your reports to: Correspondent Editor, Box 48, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571

ORLANDO, FLA.

By Connie Alexander



DUSTY RHODES
vs.
TERRY FUNK



It was an electrifying night at the Stadium. Dusty Rhodes was out for vengeance against Terry Funk. Immediately, Rhodes started beating on Funk. In the middle of the match, there was outside interference from Buggy McGraw. McGraw and Funk were beating Rhodes up pretty bad until Sweet Brown Sugar joined Rhodes and started a wild four-man brawl! After the referee climbed back into the ring, he declared a double disqualification.

OTHER BOUTS: Ray Stevens stopped Brian St. John . . . Steve Keirn, Jim Garvin, and Mike Graham stomped Mr. Hito, Mr. Sakurada, and Killer Kahn . . . Sweet Brown Sugar whipped Buggy McGraw.

COLUMBUS, GA.

By Kim Lamberth



ERNIE LADD
vs.
STAN HANSEN



In a nasty brawl between two 300-pound Texans, Stan Hansen and Ernie Ladd, the rule book was thrown out. Both men felt the affects of this brutal match. Deceit and illegal moves were the rule. With thousands cheering wildly, Hansen delivered his famous "lariat hold" and ended the bout with an impressive victory.

OTHER BOUTS: Mr. Wrestling II and Tommy Rich overpowered Ole Anderson and Ivan Koloff . . . Killer Karl Kox upended Ray Candy.

MOBILE, ALA.

By Craig Parker



AUSTIN IDOL
vs.
DICK SLATER



Cruel and obnoxious Austin Idol taunted the crowd before his big match against Dick Slater. Idol doesn't like people and people don't like him. Neither did Dick Slater. Despite deafening boos, Idol stuck to his cunning, clever plan. Skillfully eluding Slater's maneuvers, Idol managed to force a disqualification.

OTHER BOUTS: Ox Baker skinned Aha Anaoi . . . Ron Fuller destroyed both of the Assassins . . . Jerry Stubbs and Roy Welch battered Eddy Mansfield and Mike Diamond . . . Crusher Blackwell demolished The Hunter.

WRESTLING CAPITALS

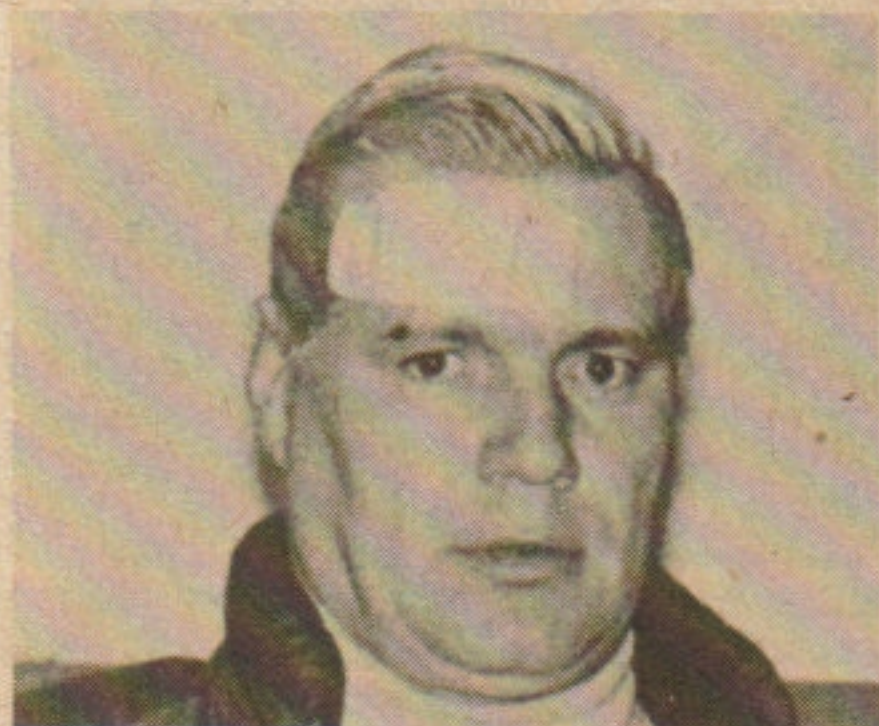


PROVIDENCE, R.I.

By Paul Morrow



**BOB BACKLUND
vs.
PAT PATTERSON**

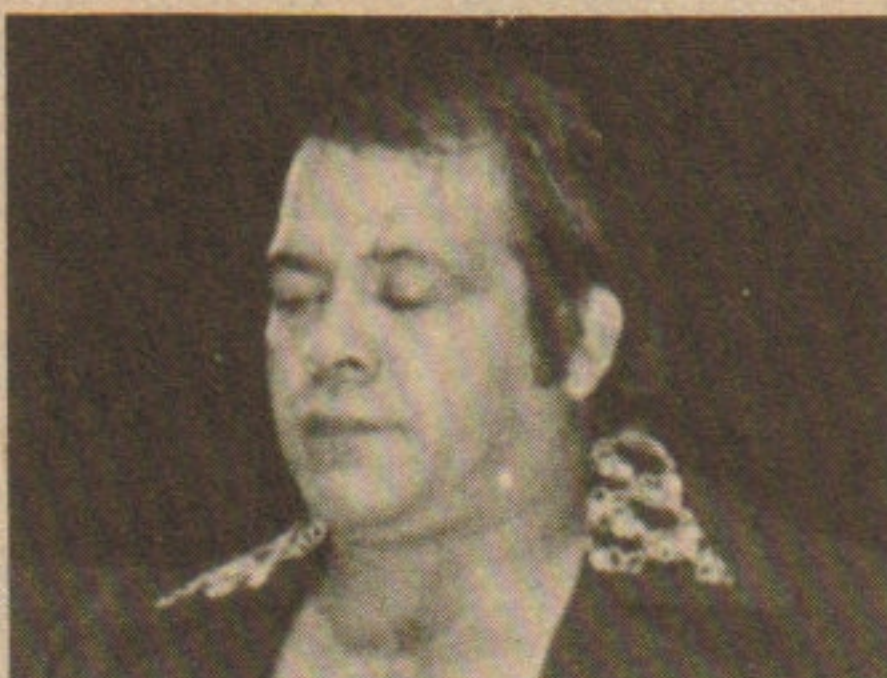


Bob Backlund showed he could draw some of Pat Patterson's blood. Obviously out for revenge, Backlund slammed Patterson's head into the ring post. Patterson nearly bested Backlund several times. However, Backlund was up for this one. After repeated rulebreaking, the referee disqualified Patterson, enabling Backlund to retain his WWF title.

OTHER BOUTS: Larry Zbyszko used some fine maneuvers in besting Jose Estrada . . . Dominic DeNucci lost to Nikolai Volkoff . . . Ted DiBiase, Ivan Putski, and Andre the Giant toppled the three Valiant Brothers in a ferocious tag team war.

MONROE, LA.

By Clifton Phillips



**JOSE LOTHARIO
vs.
GINO HERNANDEZ**



Texas' hottest feud invaded Louisiana as Gino Hernandez locked horns with Jose Lothario. Their mutual hostility was in evidence from the opening bell. Neither wrestler would ease up when inflicting pain. Horrified cries erupted from both men. Ironically, it took a brilliant maneuver to end the bout. Lothario finished off Hernandez with a flying bodypress to win the match.

OTHER BOUTS: Tank Patton stopped Billy Starr . . . Mike Bowyer halted Stan Lane . . . Mr. Wrestling II won by disqualification over Mike George.

RICHMOND, VA.

By Jane Sanders



**JIM BRUNZELL
vs.
KEN PATERA**



A young man's dream came true this night in the Richmond Coliseum. But first, Jim Brunzell had to endure nearly 20 minutes of violent brawling with Mid-Atlantic champion Ken Patera. Suddenly, it was over. Brunzell was the new champion, sending the crowd into noisy ecstasy. But Patera was not about to relinquish his crown so easily. He blind-sided Brunzell. However, Brunzell retaliated by smashing Patera in the face with the belt.

OTHER BOUTS: Rick Steamboat won by disqualification over Jimmy Snuka . . . Ric Flair downed John Studd. □

INSIDE WRESTLING'S OFFICIAL RATINGS

These Ratings Are Compiled With The Assistance Of Top Wrestlers, Promoters,
And Reporters. They Are Universally Accepted As Official

World Wrestling Federation



Champion:
BOB BACKLUND



1—BOBBY DUNCUM

American Wrestling Association



Champion:
NICK BOCKWINKEL



1—VERNE GAGNE

National Wrestling Alliance



Champion:
HARLEY RACE

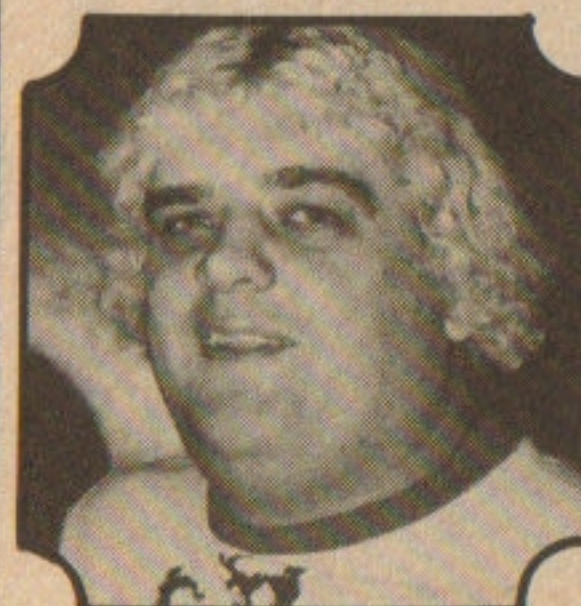


1—DUSTY RHODES

Most Popular Wrestlers



1—BOB BACKLUND
& IVAN PUTSKI
(TIE)



3—DUSTY RHODES

Most Hated Wrestlers



1—TERRY FUNK



2—PAT PATTERSON

Tag Teams



1—PAUL JONES &
BARON VON RASCHKE



1—BOBBY DUNCUM



2—KEN PATERA



3—SWEDE HANSON



4—PAT PATTERSON

- 5—IVAN PUTSKI
- 6—GREG VALENTINE
- 7—CHIEF JAY STRONGBOW
- 8—TED DiBIASE
- 9—NIKOLAI VOLKOFF
- 10—HUSSEIN ARAB

1—VERNE GAGNE



2—BILLY ROBINSON



3—MAD DOG VACHON



4—GREG GAGNE

- 5—JESSE VENTURA
- 6—CRUSHER
- 7—RAY STEVENS
- 8—JERRY LAWLER
- 9—BILL DUNDEE
- 10—STEVE OLSONOSKI

1—DUSTY RHODES



2—TERRY FUNK



3—JIMMY SNUKA

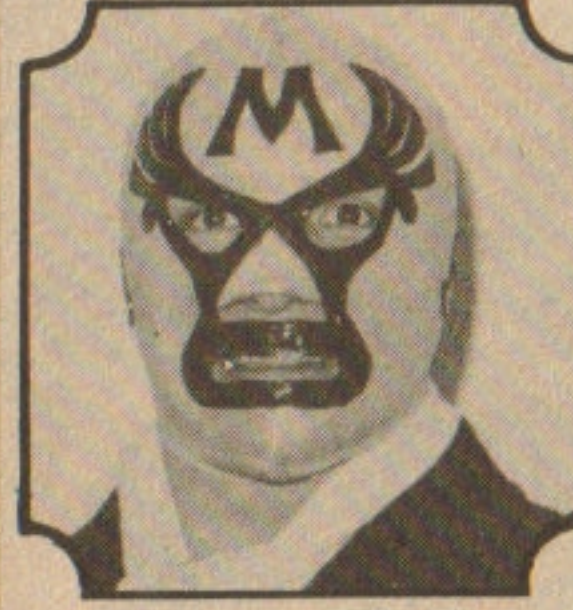


- 5—KILLER KOX
- 6—RIC FLAIR
- 7—JIM BRUNZELL
- 8—WAHOO McDANIEL
- 9—DORY FUNK JR.
- 10—MARK LEWIN

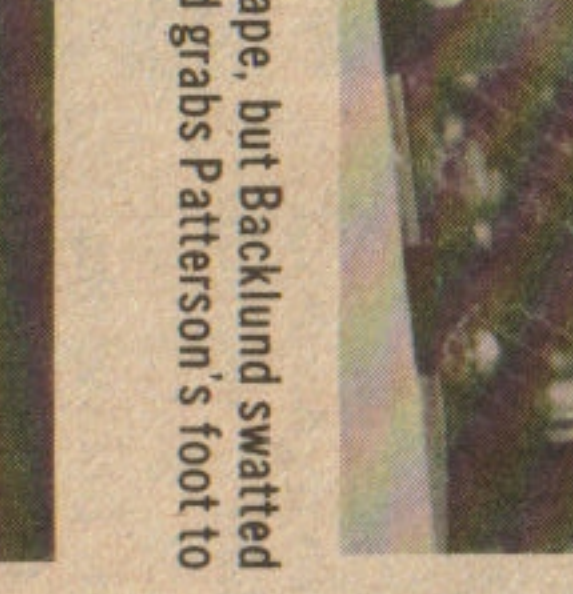
3—DUSTY RHODES



4—ANDRE THE GIANT

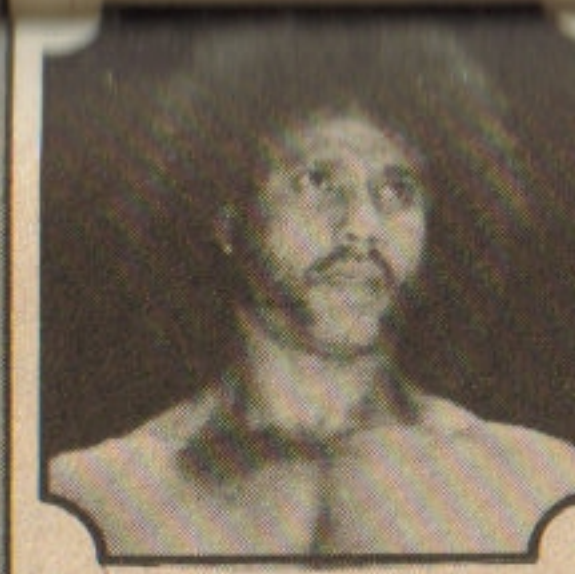


5—MIL MASCARAS



- 7—CHIEF JAY STRONGBOW
- 8—WAHOO McDANIEL
- 9—RICK STEAMBOAT
- 10—GREG GAGNE

2—PAT PATTERSON



3—JIMMY SNUKA

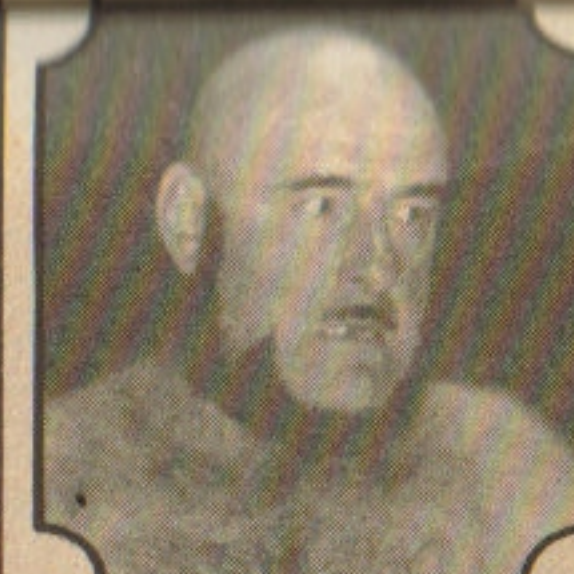


4—GREG VALENTINE



5—KEN PATERA

- 6—PAUL JONES
- 7—EDDY MANSFIELD
- 8—MARK LEWIN
- 9—IVAN KOLOFF
- 10—ERNIE LADD



2—VERNE GAGNE & MAD DOG VACHON



3—THE VALIANT BROTHERS

- 4—IVAN PUTSKI & TITO SANTANA
- 5—IVAN KOLOFF & OLE ANDERSON
- 6—MR. HITO & MR. SAKURADA
- 7—KEN PATERA & JOHN STUDD
- 8—JIM GARVIN & STEVE KEIRN
- 9—BLACKJACK MULLIGAN & RIC FLAIR
- 10—KEVIN & DAVID VON ERICH

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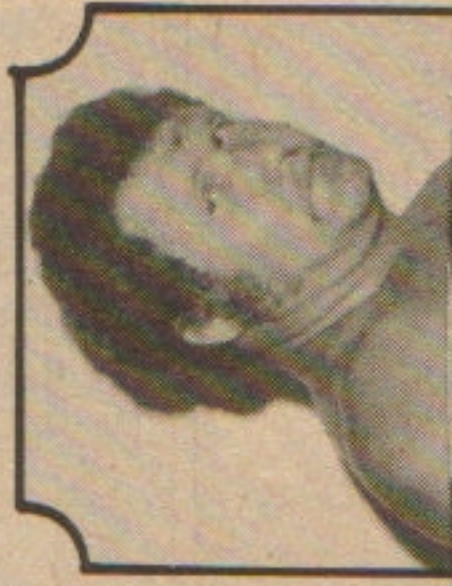
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Backlund vs. Patterson: EXCLUSIVE COVERAGE OF THE MOST FEROCIOUS CAGE MATCH IN HISTORY!

Most Popular
Wrestlers



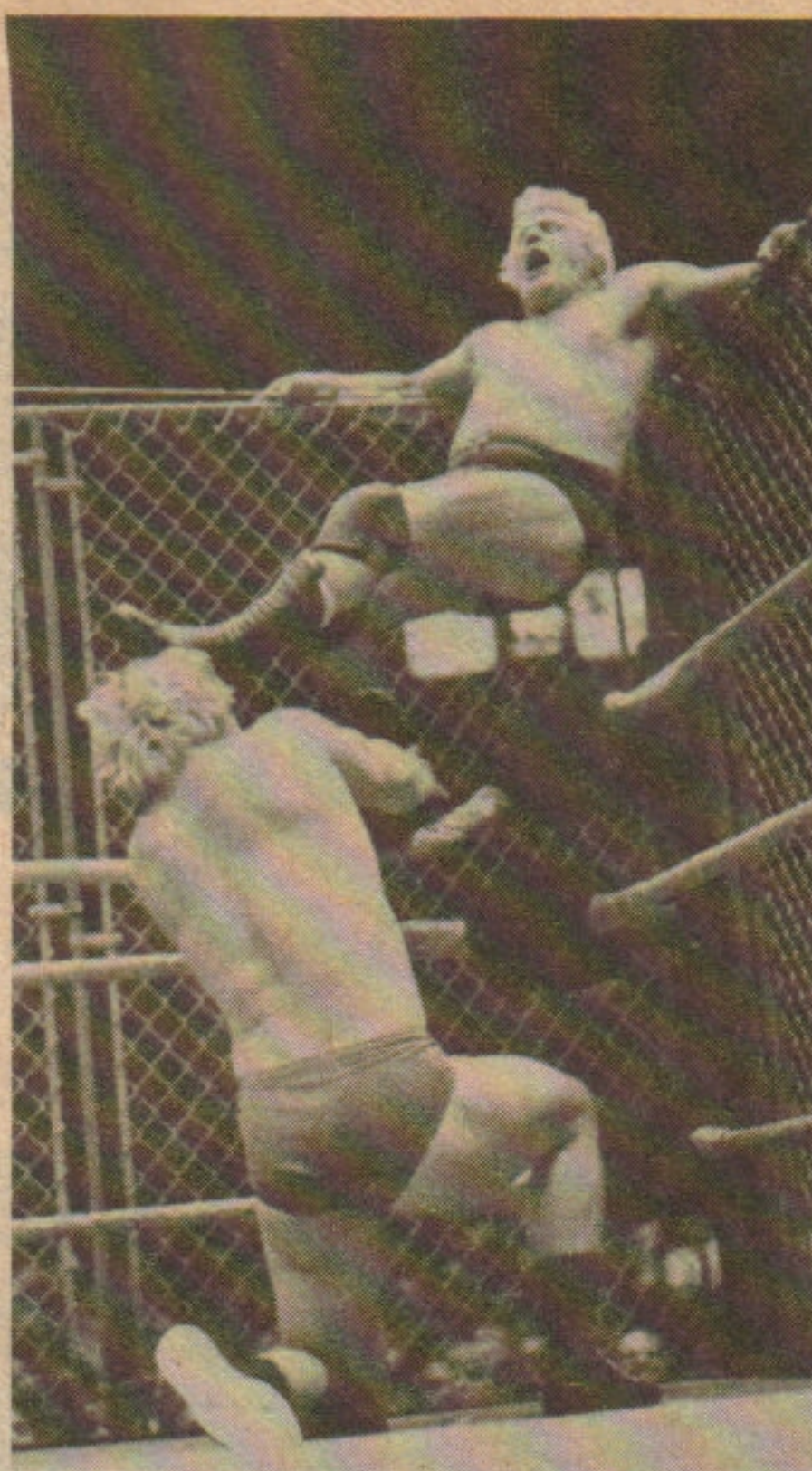
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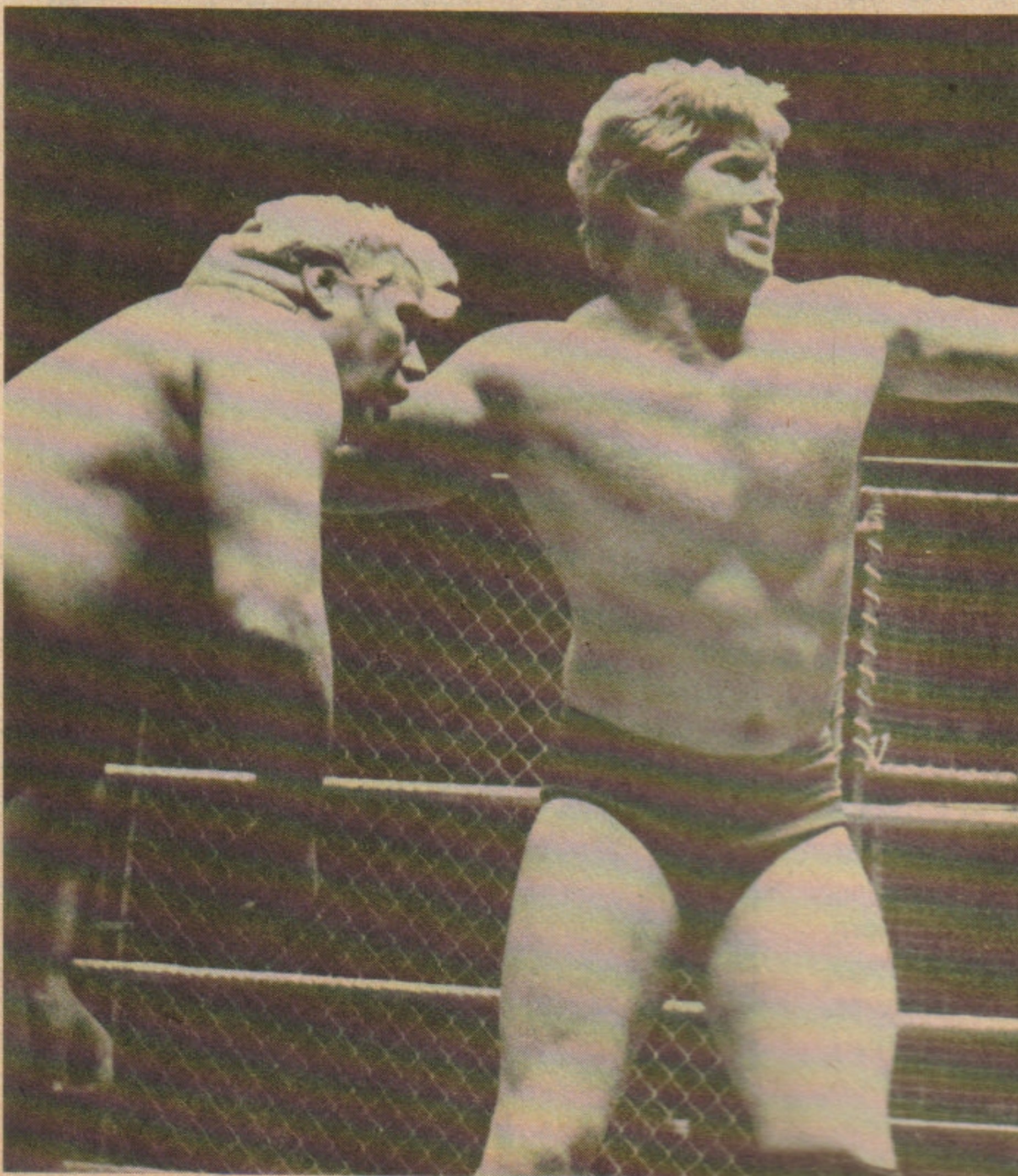
THERE CAN BE a majesty in horror, a magnificence in brutality. The spectator is almost ashamed of enjoying the savage spectacle. There are a few matches in wrestling history which have achieved a terrifying splendor. Bob Backlund's cage match against Pat Patterson was one such contest.

If we were really a civilized race, there would be no cage matches. It's the animal in us that feeds on the gory fury of a battle like this. Bloodlust was sated long before the brawl was over.

"I know I have to win this," Bob Backlund admitted before the match. "Patterson has made it look like he's better than me. For the sake of my title—and my



Left: Pat Patterson uses his brass knuckles to help his escape, but Backlund swatted him back into the ring with his right hand. Above: Backlund grabs Patterson's foot to thwart an escape. Below: Bob sends Pat into the cage.



PHOTOS BY BILL APTER & STU SAKS

pride—I've got to win this. It's funny. I'm WWF champion. I never realized being champion meant being challenger to the world.

"I'll beat him. I have to prove I'm champion. A champion always has to prove that."

The gore of a cage match didn't come as a surprise to Backlund. "If I had my way," Bob declared, "there'd be no cage matches, chain matches, or any other kind of bout where men bloody each other. Still, a champion has no choice. I've got to do it all against anyone. The champion is always at the

Nothing chills the bones like a steel cage match. Bob Backlund has gone through it before. He has tasted blood on his lips. He has tasted other men's blood. However, Backlund has never been as close to Hell as he was in this match against Pat Patterson

mercy of the sport. The sport says there has to be cage matches.

"It's strange. I'm going to do my best to turn Pat Patterson into a bloody pulp. I don't like Patterson, he stands for everything I hate, but I still don't want to destroy him. He has to try to bloody me. I guess he's a captive of the sport, too.

"People keep asking me if I'm worried about being hurt. I don't think about that at all. The pressure of being champion is so great, I don't consider things

(Continued on page 54)



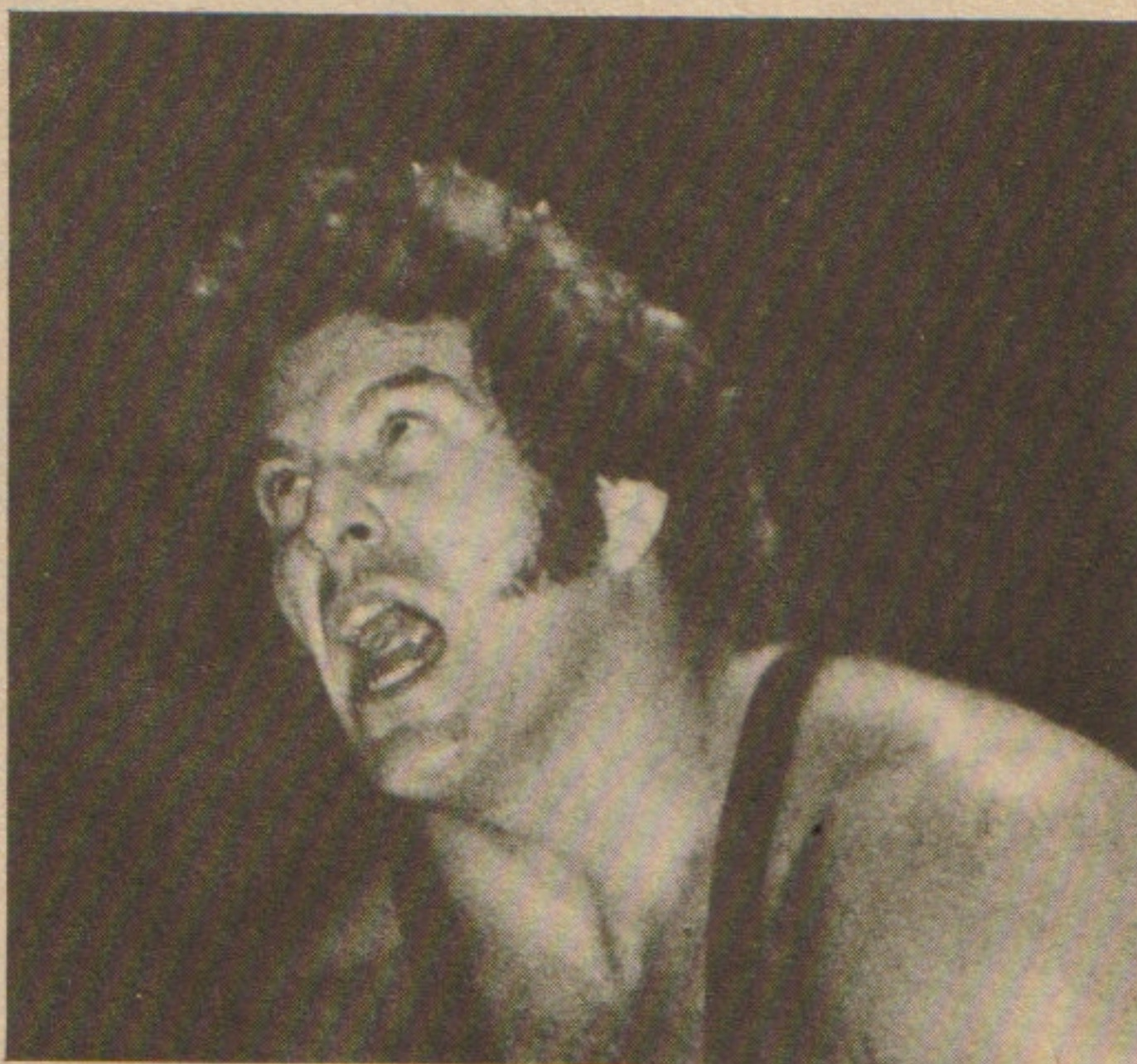
Matt Brock's **PLAIN SPEAKING**

MEMPHIS, TENN.: Hate to see a friendship dissolve. Never forget the time my parakeet died and I wouldn't eat anything yellow for a month. Much the same thing happened between Bill Dundee and Jerry Lawler. They were best of friends. Their tag team was renown throughout the area. Even when they didn't wrestle together, they stayed close friends. But greed has a way of cleaving friendship. Bockwinkel was coming to town. He promised to wrestle the top contender in Memphis. Bill Dundee thought he should be the one. Alas, Lawler felt it was his right to wrestle for the AWA belt. Misunderstanding led to harsh words and flying fists. They went into the ring one night and left with a hatred nothing could resolve. What a shame. And I still didn't see Dolly Parton.



JERRY LAWLER

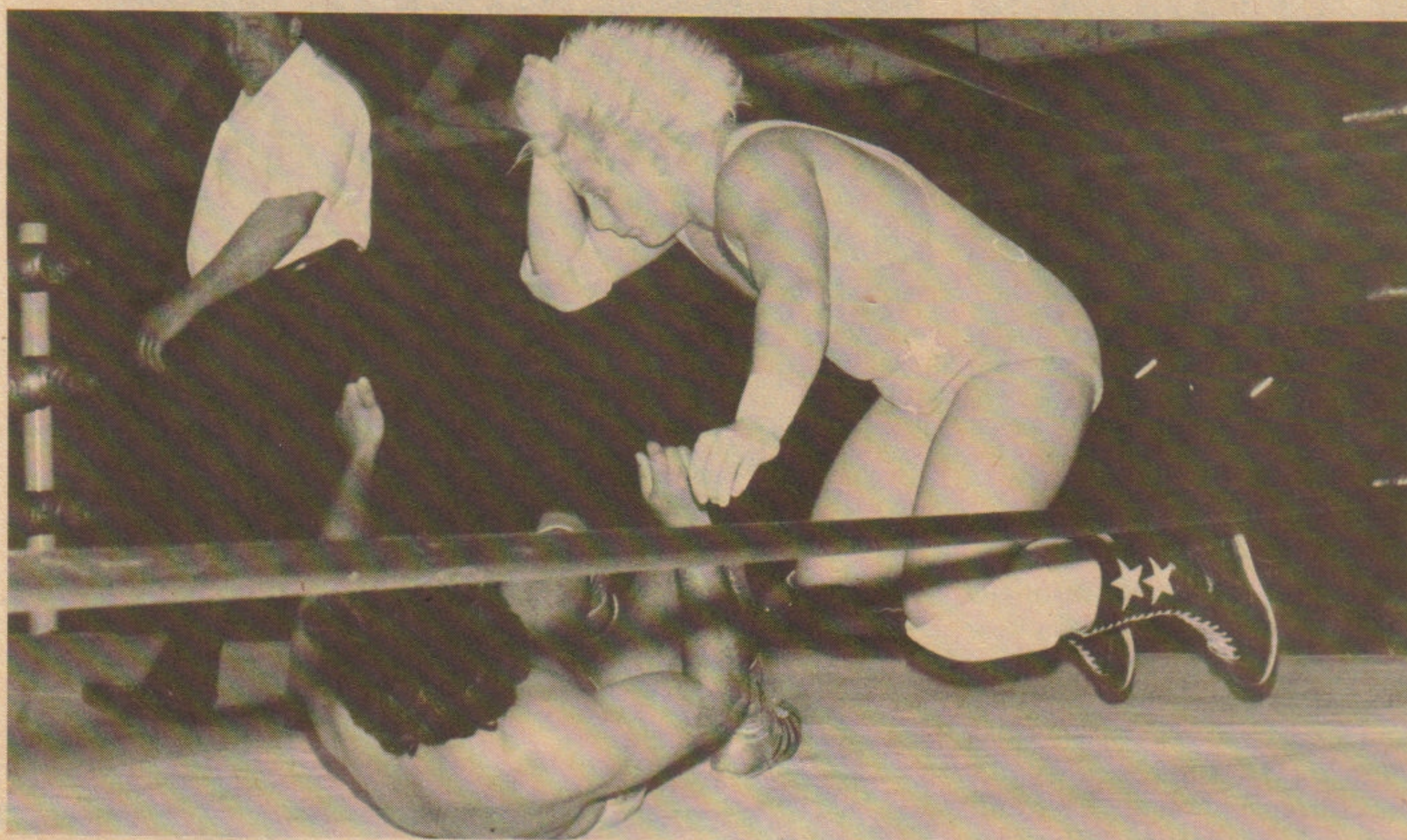
RICHMOND, VA.: Jim Brunzell is the new Mid-Atlantic champion. I caught up with the joyous youngster shortly after he disposed of Ken Patera. We had a long and fascinating talk. Saying goodbye to a friend can be painful. Yet Brunzell had to leave Greg Gagne. More importantly, Brunzell had to leave the AWA. He didn't feel the future was there for him. He had to try new areas. From what I can see of fan reaction, Brunzell made the right choice. And what of Patera? His tale is a tragic one. He could have been one of the greats, yet he succumbed to greed. I wouldn't count Patera out. He's resourceful. Look for him to make a big push for Bob Backlund's WWF title.



KEN PATERA

CHICAGO, ILL.: I walk into the locker room and this pile of muscle grabs my lapel and flings me against the wall. The thud I dimly heard was my skull slamming against concrete. Last time I heard a sound like that was when someone dropped a case of Scotch. I cried on both occasions. Sensing danger, I panicked and

Harder than nails, veteran wrestling reporter Matt Brock has logged more miles covering wrestling than any other journalist. Every month Matt will travel to the sport's hotbeds, reporting everything he sees without fear or favor

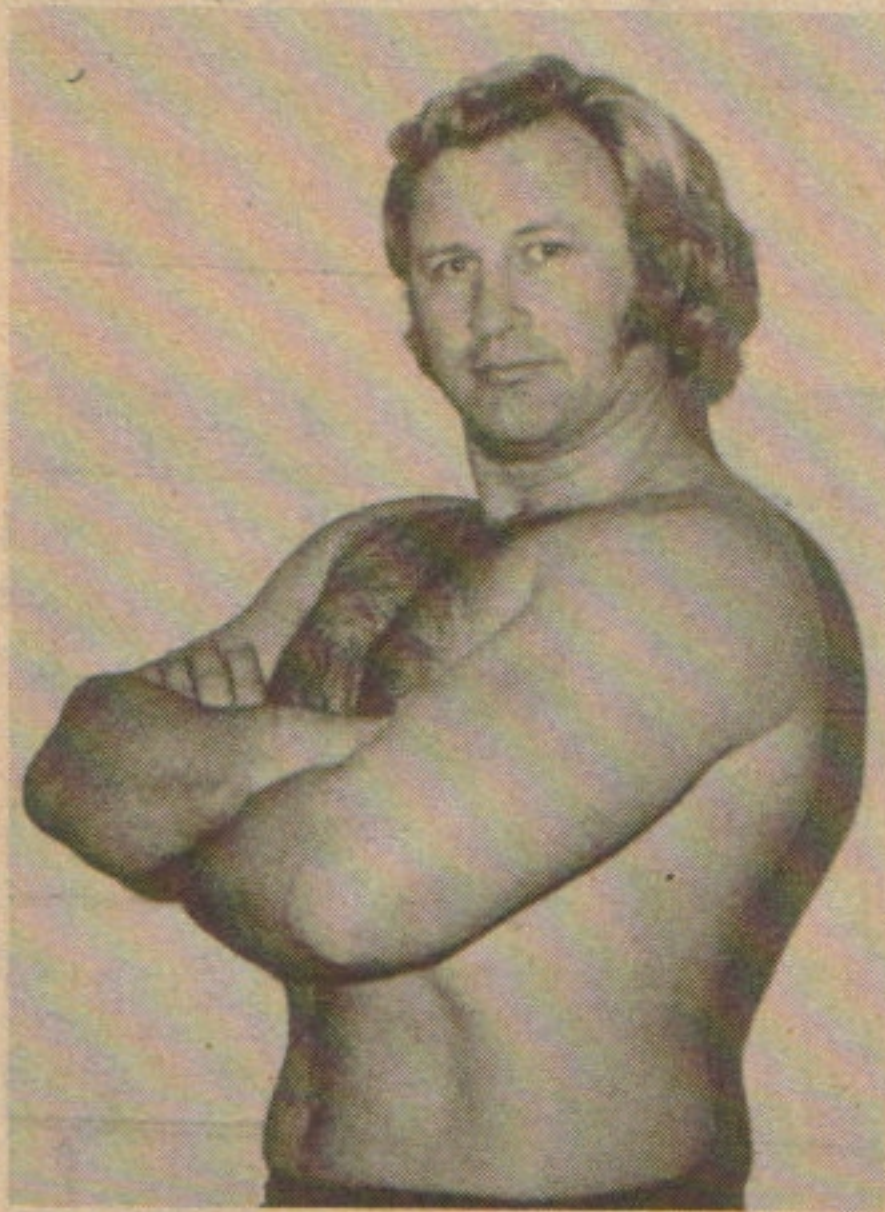


EDDY MANSFIELD

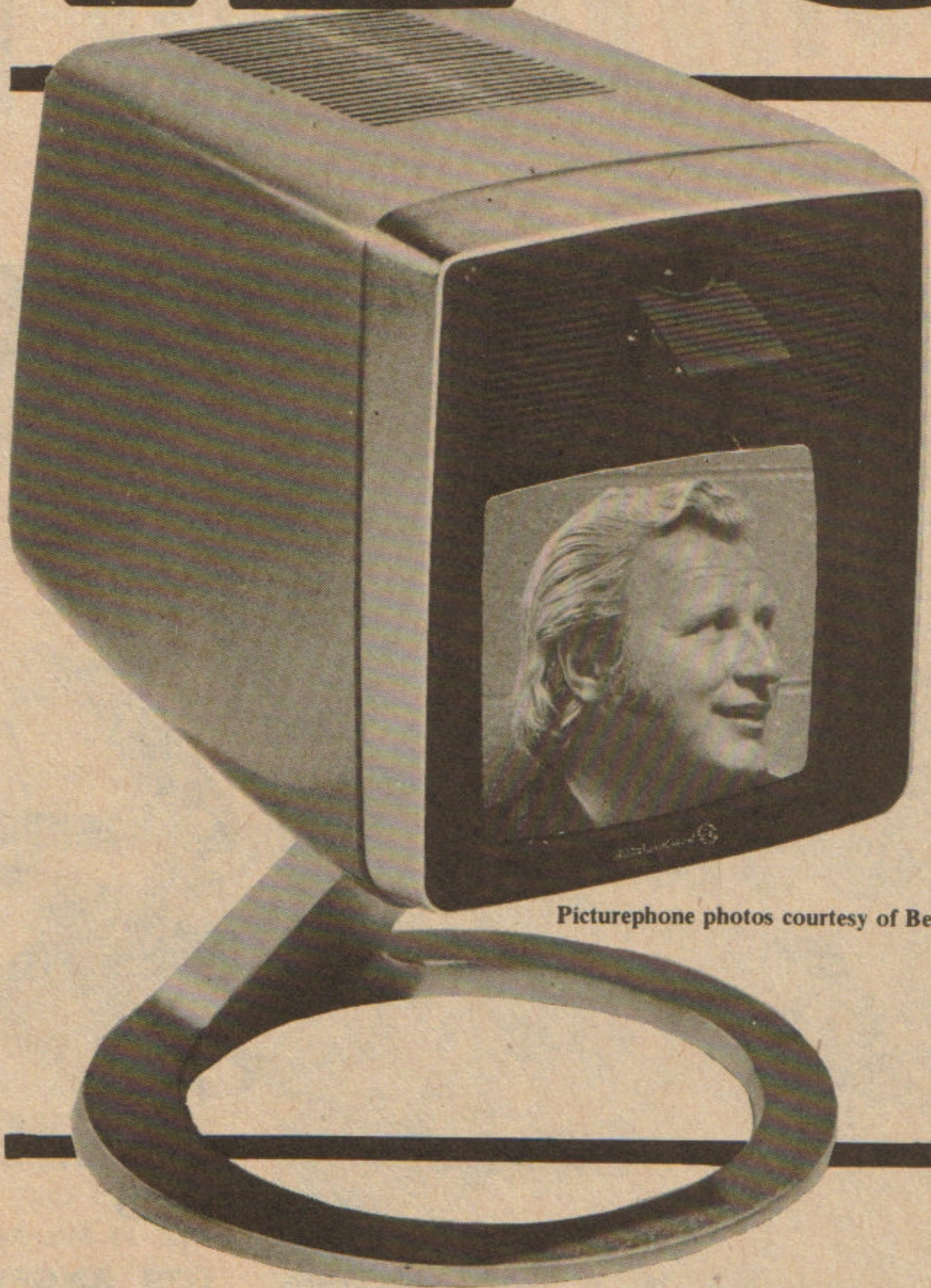
covered my face with my hands. Once I recognized the hearty laughter, I relaxed. Just Crusher's way of saying hello. Crusher and I go back a few years. Here's a guy who takes no guff from anyone and is totally his own man. I respect that. Few wrestlers around with the guts to do what they feel is right and hang the consequences. Crusher is a man of the people. After the matches, we went to a local watering hole and recounted tales of grappling greatness. Sometime during the evening I vaguely recall a table being broken. Ah, they don't make men like Crusher anymore. Nor tables, for that matter.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF.: Came back for another look at Eddy Mansfield. Pretty boys don't impress me. As you can tell, hard-driving professionals who go out and do an honest day's work impress me. First time I saw Mansfield, his self-love annoyed me. I committed the unforgivable sin of journalism: I permitted prejudice to cloud my judgement. Mansfield's pretty damn good. He took apart a couple of guys and re-assembled them in a helluva professional way. I went back to talk to him. He's still obnoxious and egotistical. Still don't care for him. But he's a fine wrestler. □

ONE ON



(For years, Nick Bockwinkel and Bobby "The Brain" Heenan were synonymous with ruthless success. With Heenan plotting strategies and Bockwinkel implementing them, the AWA title seemed only a first step toward inevitable national domination. However, their violent methods ruptured the team. Heenan was banished from the AWA and formed a new home in Georgia. As for Bockwinkel, he continued his incredible championship reign. Bockwinkel, in Minneapolis, speaks to Heenan, presently in Georgia.)



Picturephone photos courtesy of Bell Telephone.

NICK BOCKWINKEL:

Brain, how are you?

BOBBY HEENAN:

Good, Nick, How's life in the AWA?

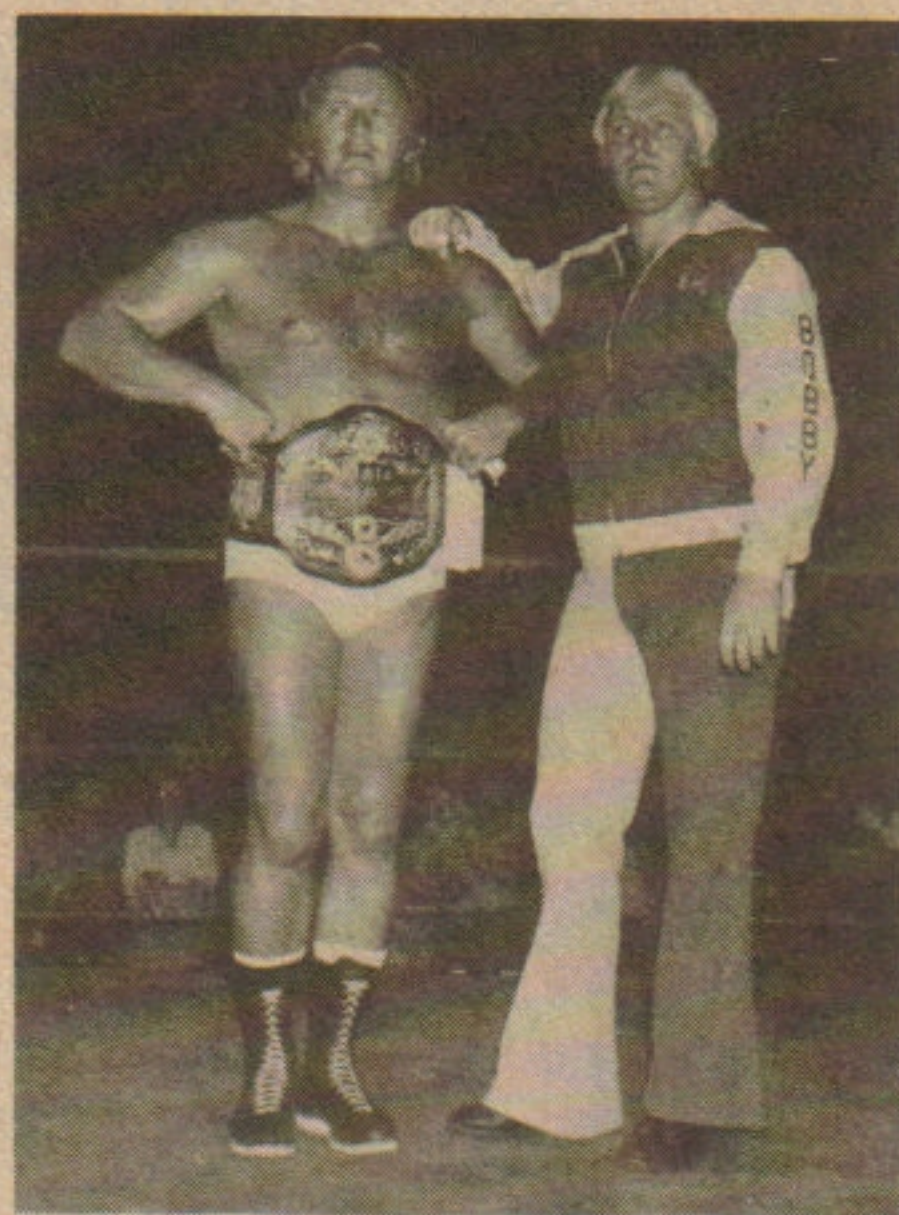
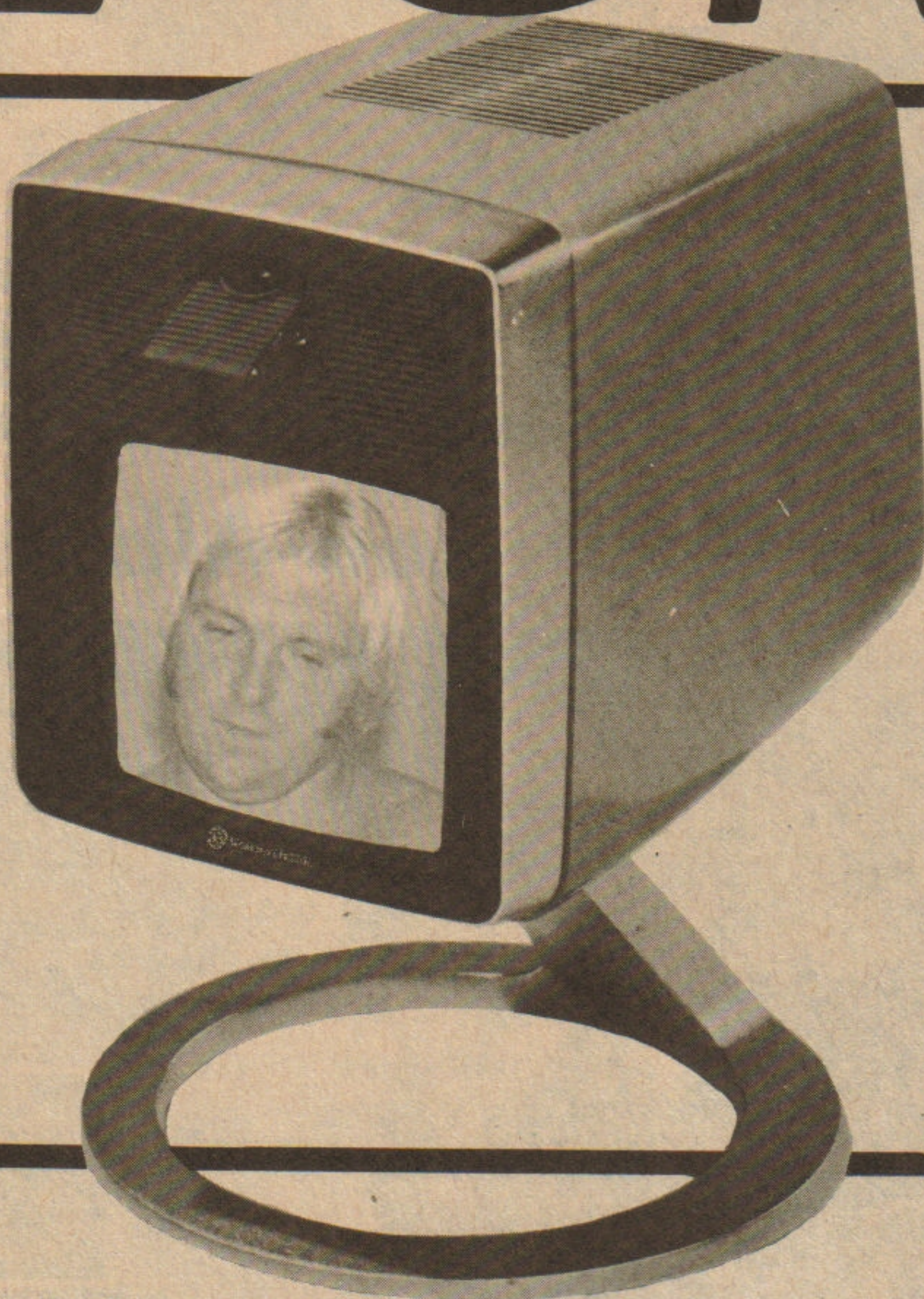
NB: Rolling and swallowing everyone up.

BH: You sound bored.

NB: I have a lot to take care of, now. Skull sessions and the

Every month the telephone wires will crackle as two top grapplers rage and argue. We'll print the unedited transcript of their conversations, giving the fans a privileged glimpse at wrestlers which can be found nowhere else

WOW



like.
BH: Musta been a lot easier when you had Bobby Heenan thinking for you.
NB: You never thought for me.
BH: I didn't mean it like that. I was, after all, indispensable in plotting successful strategies.
NB: I'm still champ.
BH: I know, old buddy. Just that we were such a great team.

NB: Yeah, well, how's things by you?
BH: Oh, I've found some new dudes to turn into champions. You know the Heenan magic. Take a somewhat talented, ambitious wrestler and breathe genius into him.
NB: Like with me?
BH: Sure, uh, you had more talent than the average man.

What's up in the AWA?
NB: Oh, that old bum Gagne is still running amuck, boring people.
BH: I thought you'd finished him off by now.
NB: No.
BH: Oh, he is kinda greasy and slimy. I hear his kid's the same way.
NB: Worse. His kid doesn't have half the talent his father has, and that's not saying much to begin with.
BH: I got some punks down here, like this creep kid Tommy Rich.
NB: The blond?
BH: Yeah. He thinks ladies swooning for him is enough. I can't tell you how many times my main man Black-jack Lanza had pounded
(Continued on page 64)



“WHY I FIRED THE VALIANTS”

By Capt. Lou Albano

HAVE I GOT a story for you. As usual, it's brilliant and incisive and shocking. Typical Albano fare. Let me go back a little and talk about a recent bout involving my champions of the WWF, Jerry and John Valiant.

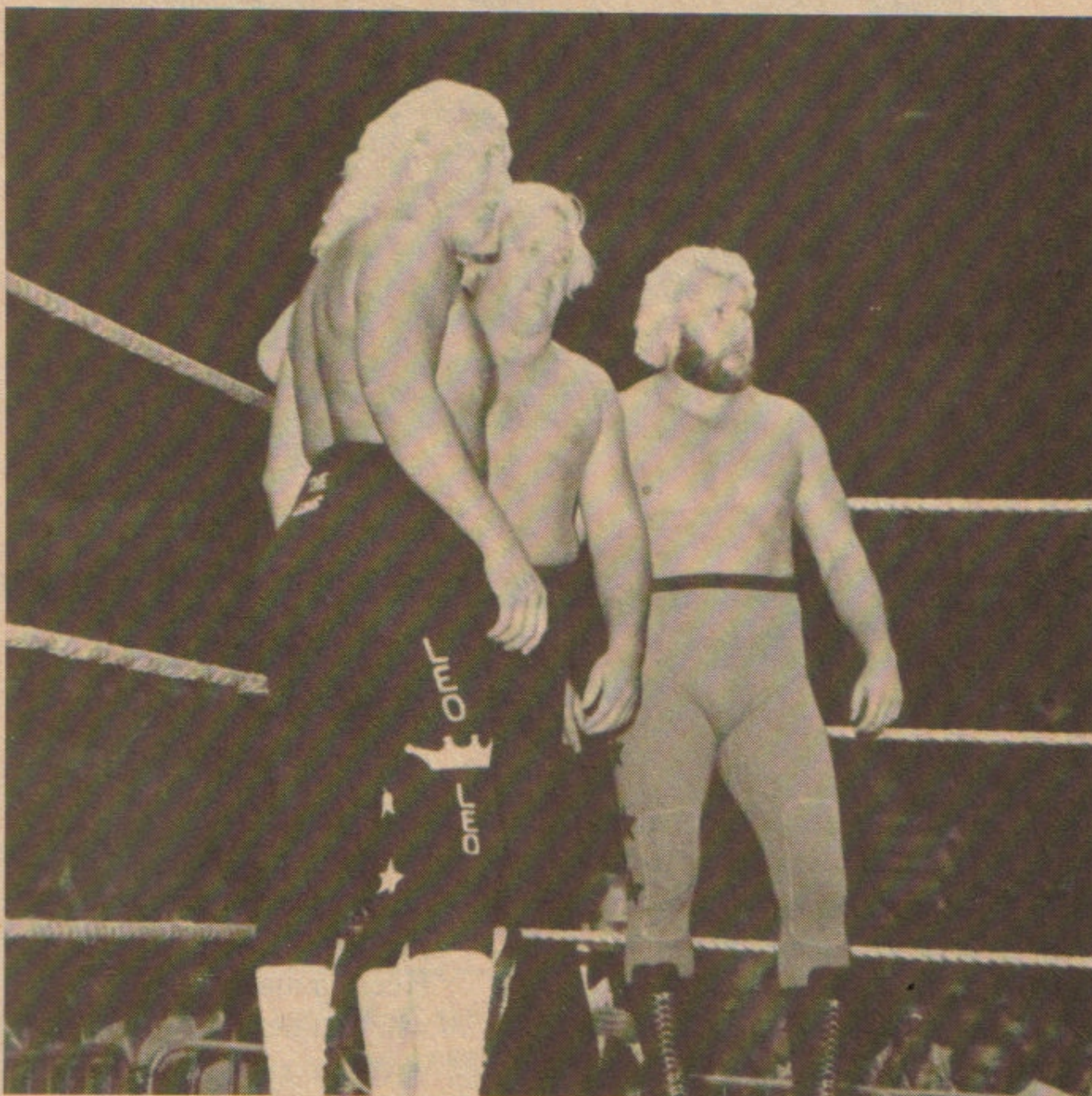
We were tussling with an ugly crew. I won't mention them because they make my beard twitch and my stomach rumble. As usual, our "opponents" pulled some cheap trick. They brought some kind of foreign object into the ring.

Hell, that made me sad. I had to defend my champions. Wouldn't you know it, we got disqualified. Happens all the time. A creep cheats, I disarm him and get blamed for my act of self-defense.

I've come to expect that. Little ants always try to punch holes in greatness. Not with Lou Albano. I am too great to be hurt. It's my champions I'm not sure about.

Yup, Jerry and John have gotten me disqualified one time too many. I'm angry. Something's got to be done about this.

I've talked to the Valiant Brothers. I've pleaded with them. I've done everything a manager could possibly do, and more.



The three Valiant Brothers—Jim, Jerry, and John—prepare to do battle at Madison Square Garden. Jerry and John, the WWF tag team champions, are angry with Albano for not getting them title defenses in the WWF's largest arena.



FIRE LOU ALBANO? DOES WANT TO JIMMY VALIANT

By Steven Farhood

THE DRESSING ROOM was tense. The match was to begin in 10 minutes. I saw the look on Jimmy Valiant's face. He was nervous and did nothing to hide his anxieties. But knowing the Valiant Brothers and Lou Albano, I realized that it was more than the pressure of the upcoming match. A thick, stale wave of bad vibrations circulated freely across the room. The Valiant Brothers, Jimmy, Johnny, and Jerry, are generally loose, cocky, and relaxed athletes. But the Captain, Lou Albano, is a Mother Goose in a shoe three sizes too small. The relationship between the manager and the wrestlers is cramped, I think the earthquake may already have begun. It was five minutes before the six-man tag team match. Albano had already announced that he was going to participate as one of the

The WWF tag team champions are the Valiant brothers—Luscious Johnny and Gentleman Jerry. So where does this leave the third Valiant brother, Handsome Jimmy? According to wrestling's hottest rumor, it leaves him alone, frustrated, and with one thought in his mind—to fire the man who he feels has betrayed him, Captain Louis Albano.

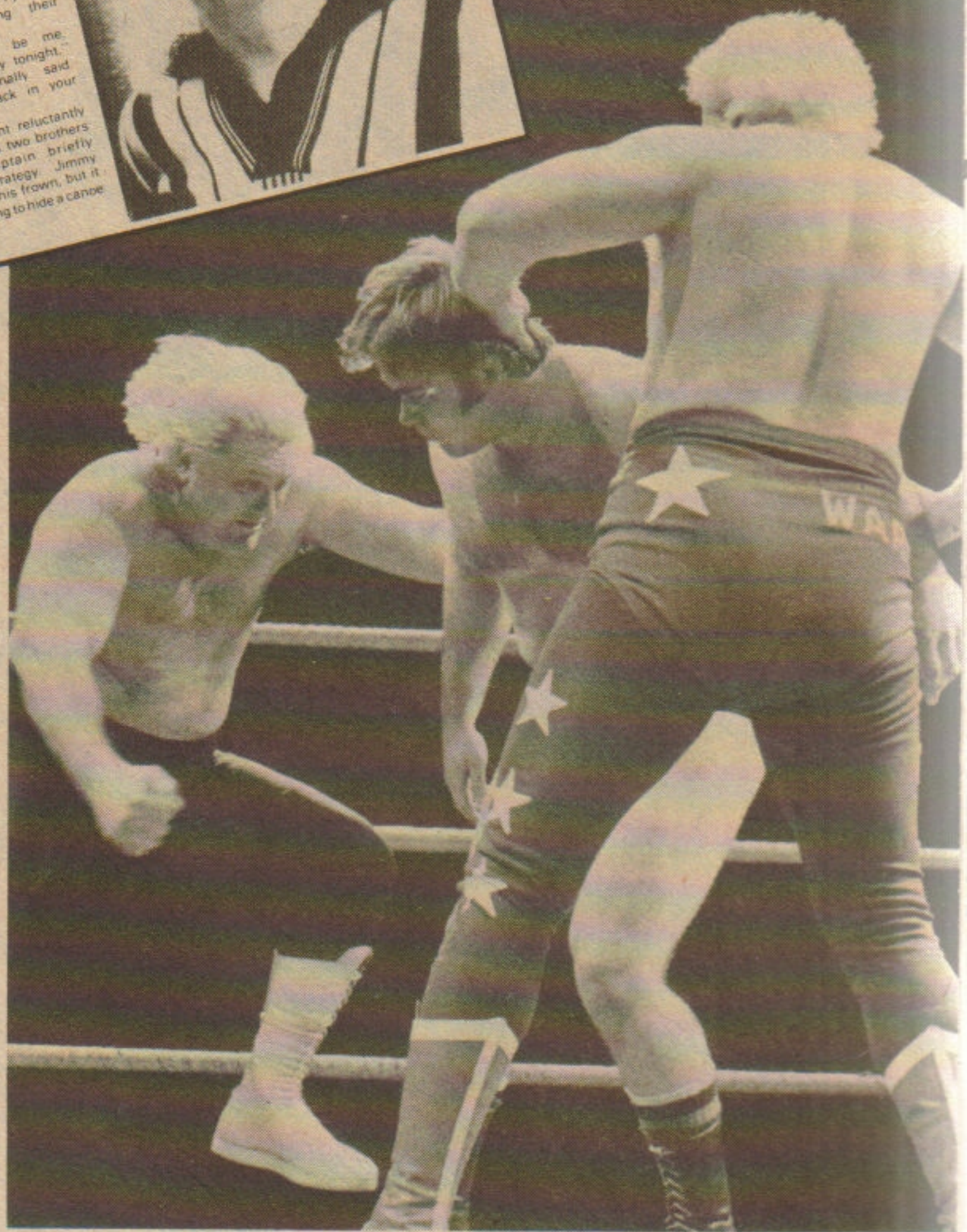


Jimmy Valiant (below) watched as his brothers and Albano wrestled. Johnny delivers an elbow smash to the head of Tony Curran (above left). Brother Jerry and Albano doubleteam a helpless Larry Zbyszko (above).

competitors. But he had not yet told the Valiants which two would join him. Johnny, Jimmy and Jerry sat nervously, awaiting their leader's decision. "Okay, it will be me. Johnny and Jerry tonight," the Captain finally said. "Jimmy, get back in your street clothes..." Jimmy Valiant reluctantly dressed as his two brothers and the Captain briefly discussed strategy. Jimmy tried to hide his frown, but it was like trying to hide a canoe.

Back in July, **INSIDEWRESTLING** gave the first warnings of a Valiant-Albano rift (left). The Valiants doubleteam Larry Zbyszko (below).

The tempestuous partnership between Lou Albano and WWF tag team champions Jerry and John Valiant may be drawing to a close. Friction and outright hostility has surfaced. A violent difference of opinion threatens to drive a permanent wedge into their relationship. Albano tries to explain what happened



But it's got to change. We can't keep getting disqualified.

And I have to listen to their complaints. Can you bust? The Valiants whine and moan that they never get big title defenses at the Garden. I work my fingers to the bone and this is how they return my affection. The Lumberjacks weren't good enough. They didn't live up to the high standards a Lou Albano champion should have. It

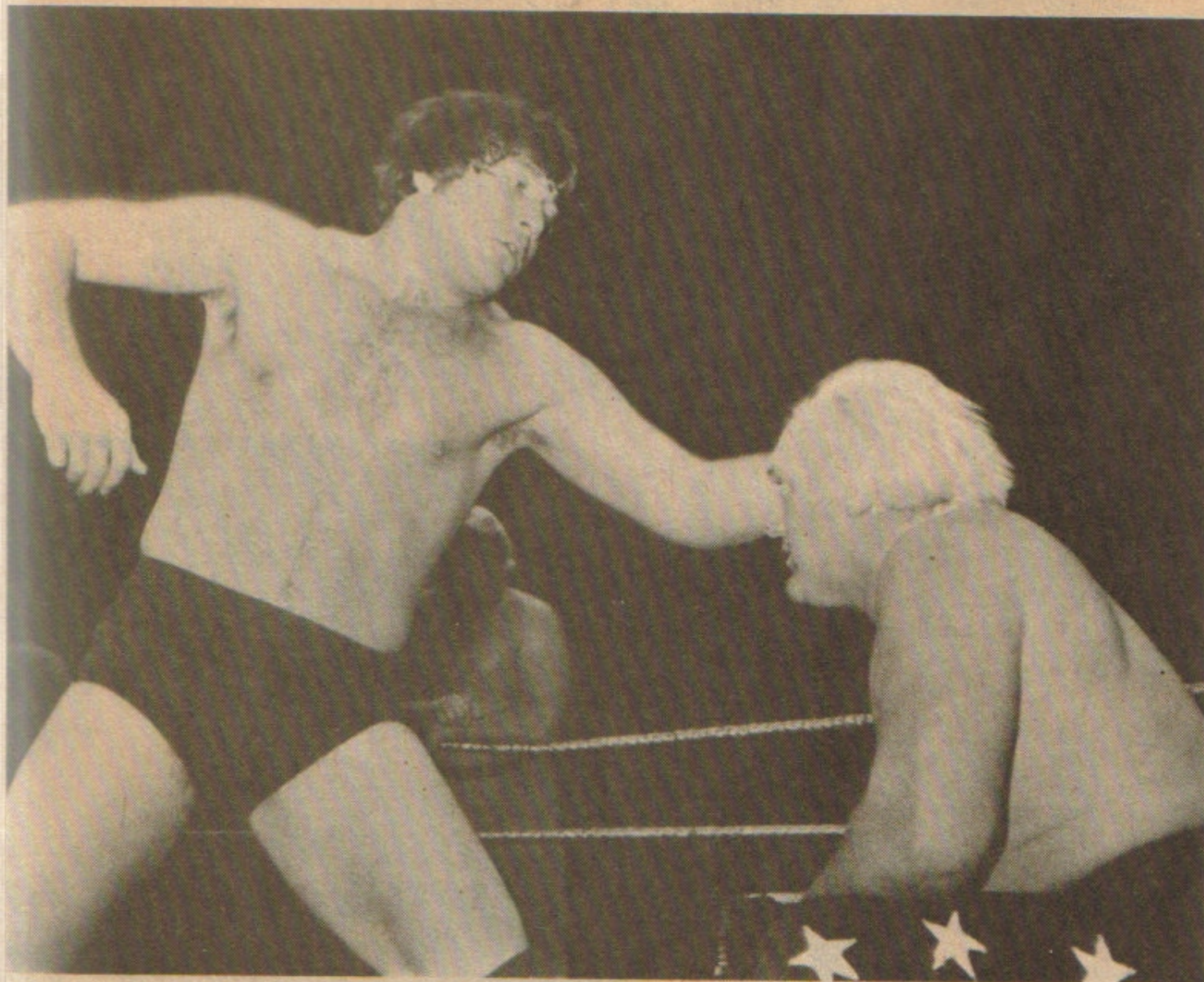
was inevitable they'd lose to jokes like DeNucci and Zbyszko. I was proud when the Valiants won the WWF title.

Who masterminded it? Who is the guiding genius behind their daily struggles? Who fights off and out-wits pasta-face Sammartino, and pimple-face Backlund, both of whom want me stopped? Who risks his life dealing with slimy two-faced twerps like Ivan Putski

and Andre the Giant?

Me. Captain Lou Albano. And this is the gratitude I get. Could you believe this?

So I sat Jerry and John down one day and we had ourselves a little talk. I wanted it to be nice. Fans know what a kind, considerate man I am. Well, let's say Jerry and John weren't so nice. Or even polite. They were rude. I take guff from no one.



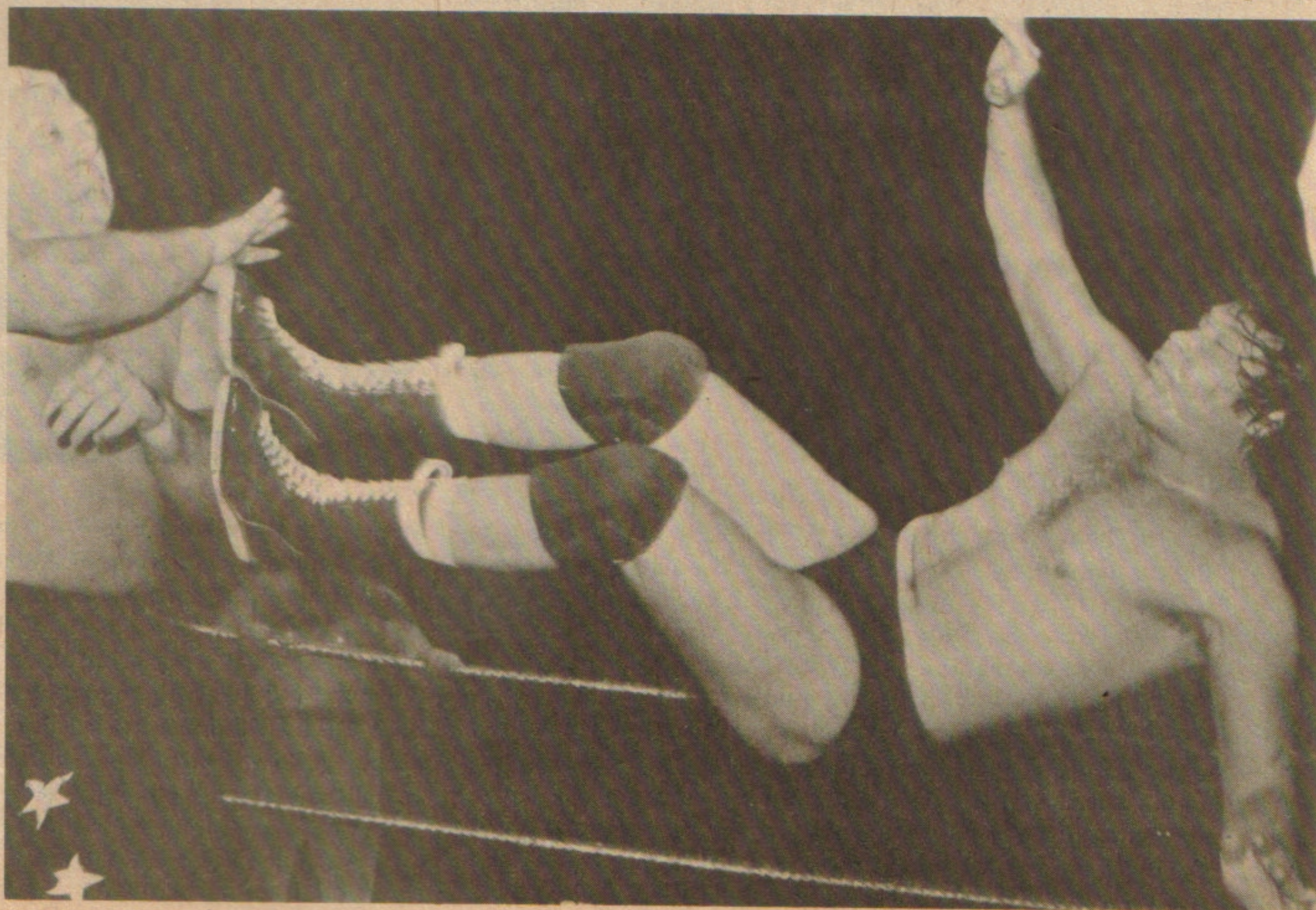
You fans remember when that ugly behemoth Andre sneak-attacked me? I was protecting my men and that big blue whale leaps in and tries to beat me up. Hah, it'll take a better man than Andre the Ginzo to beat up Albano. Fans may have seen Andre running away after I whipped his face.

I don't mention this to pat myself on the back, though I do deserve it. I only mention this to show what lengths I will go to for my wrestlers. I'll bet no one ever heard the time I knocked Sammartino cold with a right.

Calamari-face made some snide remark about Jerry Valiant. Other managers may be sniveling cruds and laugh off a vicious remark like that. Not Captain Lou. I told Bruno to apologize or I'd wipe the floor with him. Sammartino knows what the floor feels like. He's spent three-quarters of his career on the canvas. Well that hairy stuffed shell wouldn't apologize. I'm a gentleman. I told

(Continued on page 62)

If the Valiants don't follow his every order, Albano wants no part of them. Jerry was apparently not following orders against Ted DiBiase. Above: With Jerry at his mercy, DiBiase holds his hair and throws a right. Below: Jerry tries to fend off a DiBiase dropkick.



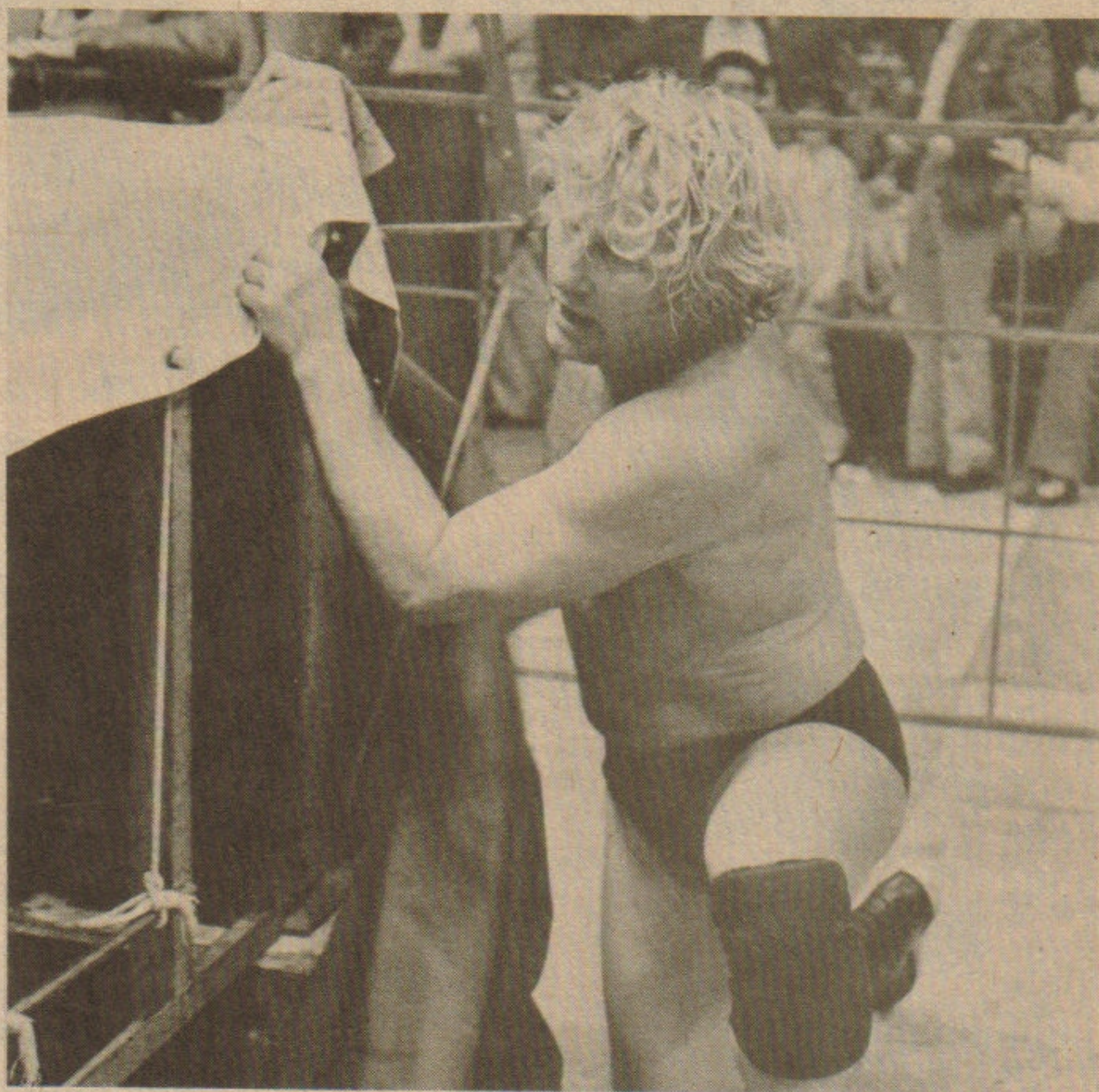
INSIDE WRESTLING

42

CAPSULE PROFILE

HAS A HYPNOTIC intellect capable of intimidating and controlling opponents (*"I'm the brightest wrestler there ever was. I don't know anyone who disputes that"*) . . . Strategy combines cunning, brute force, and surprising agility (*"I work with my natural gifts, which are considerable"*) . . . Consistently underrated when first won AWA title from Verne Gagne . . . At that time, managed by Bobby Heenan (*"I owe a lot to Bobby. And he owes a lot to me"*) . . . Harshly criticized for high number of disqualifications (*"Genius is misunderstood. Can't expect moronic refs to understand my genius"*) . . . When Heenan was banished from the AWA, predictions of his swift demise arose (*"Bobby was smart. Still, I was the one who went out there and did the job. Think people realize that now"*) . . . His ambitions extend beyond the walls of the AWA (*"I look*

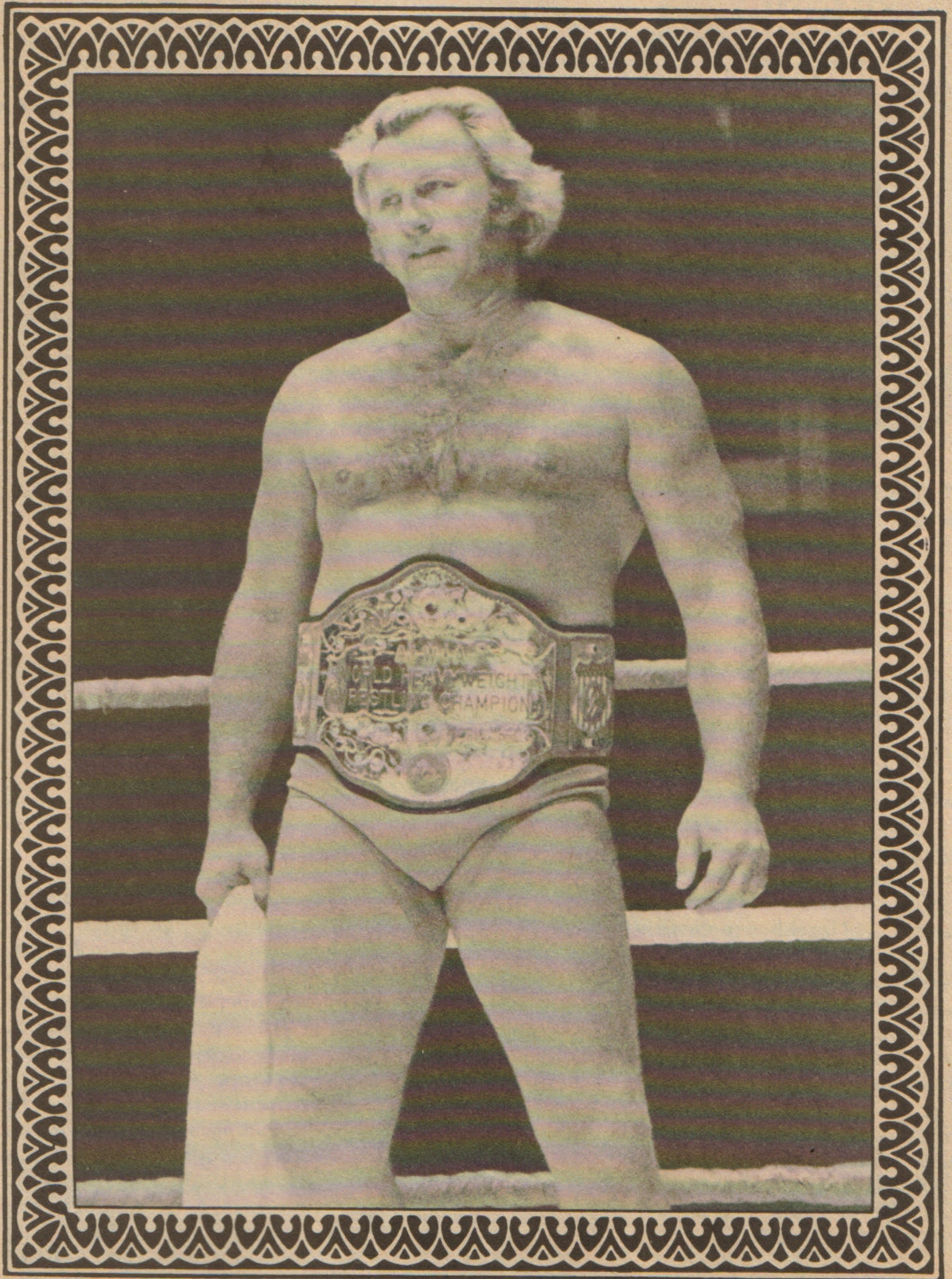
NICK BOCKWINKEL



Bockwinkel struggles to re-enter the ring during his battle with Bob Backlund (above). Nick poses with his former manager, Bobby Heenan (left).

around and see pitiful chumps in the other federations. Race, Backlund, bums") . . . An aloof man with an impenetrable personality (*"I'm easy to understand. Only trouble is the few creatures intelligent enough to understand me aren't in wrestling. Who's got a mind, Verne Gagne?"*) . . . Despises categorizations like scientific wrestler or rulebreaker (*"Classifications are for narrow minds. I go beyond that"*). □

CAPSULE PROFILE PIN-UP



NICK BOCKWINKEL

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Each day, out of the thousands of letters we receive, hundreds of them are from fans asking the whereabouts of their favorite wrestler. In this special column, we will try to answer the questions you ask the most!

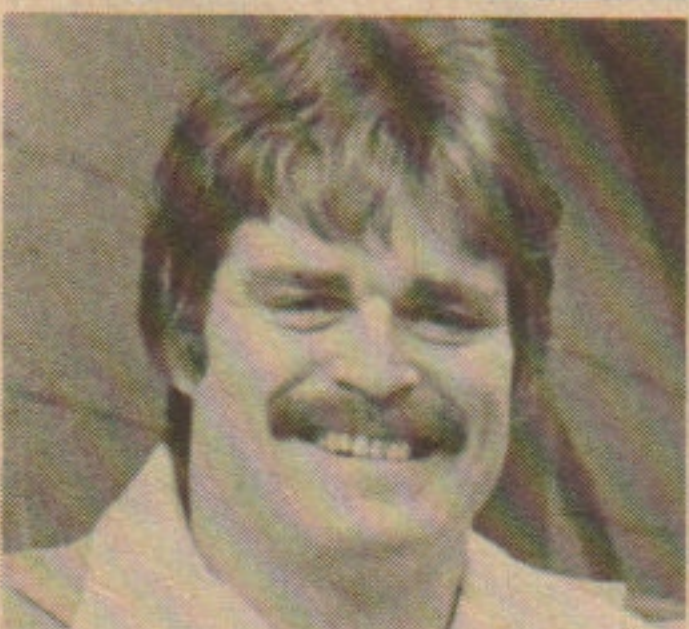


JIM BRUNZELL

Brunzell's initial foray into the Mid-Atlantic area was a brilliant success. It's hard to quibble with a major title, which Brunzell won from Ken Patera in a brutal bout. So Brunzell will be in the Mid-Atlantic area for a while. A long while, he hopes.

MR. WRESTLING II

The masked man is still traveling between Georgia and Louisiana. When II first announced he would be leaving Georgia on a sporadic basis, fans protested. While they haven't grown accustomed to II in other areas, they realize a valuable commodity must be shared. And treasured.



STEVE TRAVIS

The WWF Rookie of the Year is presently amazing Florida wrestling fans with his sensational scientific maneuvers. It didn't take Travis long to become embroiled in several heated feuds, notably with Don Muraco, King Curtis, and the newest Japanese rulebreakers, Mr. Hito and Mr. Sakurada.

KEN PATERA

Patera has never concealed his disdain for WWF champion Bob Backlund. Perhaps it's jealousy or pure contempt, but Patera has vowed to exterminate Backlund and claim the WWF championship. Patera is in the area playing his own brand of evil.



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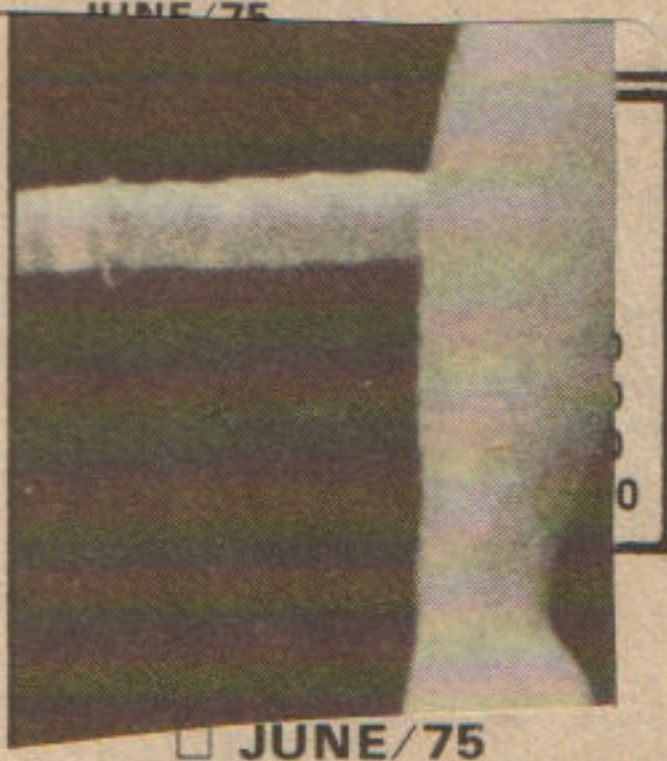
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ON THE ROAD

(Continued from Page 8)

Rhodes."

And Dusty said . . .

"Bruno is a nice man. I don't avoid him."

I must say I believed neither. At least fully. From what I could detect, they did respect each other. But there was a fear. A worry that a confrontation might cause undue friction and might lead to . . .

Yes, neither Sammartino nor Rhodes wants to wrestle each other. They're afraid that a chance meeting—even in a hallway—could lead to an inevitable friendship, and a public demand for a match.

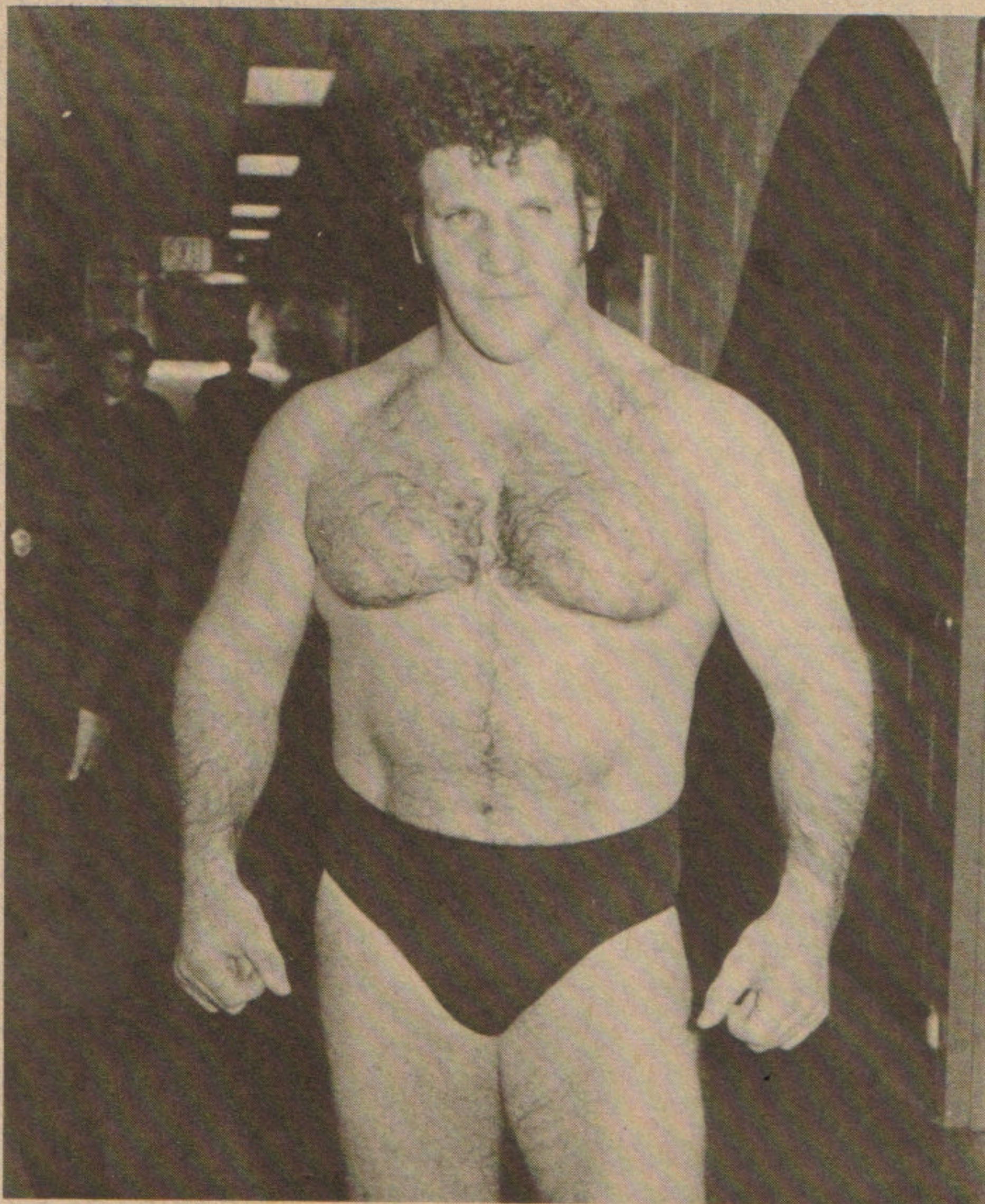
They're not afraid of each other. They're afraid of what it would do to wrestling.

"You know, I don't want a feud with Rhodes," Bruno said. "Once you start with someone, fans expect you will keep fighting them."

But what about teaming?

"Me and Bruno wouldn't go together," Rhodes said. "You have two excellent wrestlers, man, and I don't think we could harmonize. Our styles are too different."

"You know how things get out of hand," Dusty continued. "I have my own commitments and so does Bruno. If we ever formed a tag



Bruno Sammartino explained that the reasons he and Dusty Rhodes never teamed is because he did not want false rumors to be spread after the wrestlers' individual commitments forced the inevitable split.

team, it would hurt our careers."

Sammartino agreed.

"I have trouble teaming with people," Bruno said, smiling. "Maybe I'm not the type of guy who should have a steady partner. I could see what would happen if me and the Dream teamed up.

"We would work well together



"The American Dream" and "Wrestling's Living Legend" take time to pose in the Garden dressing room.

and beat up some people. Who knows, we might even win a title. Then our individual commitments would interfere and we'd have to break up," Sammartino continued.

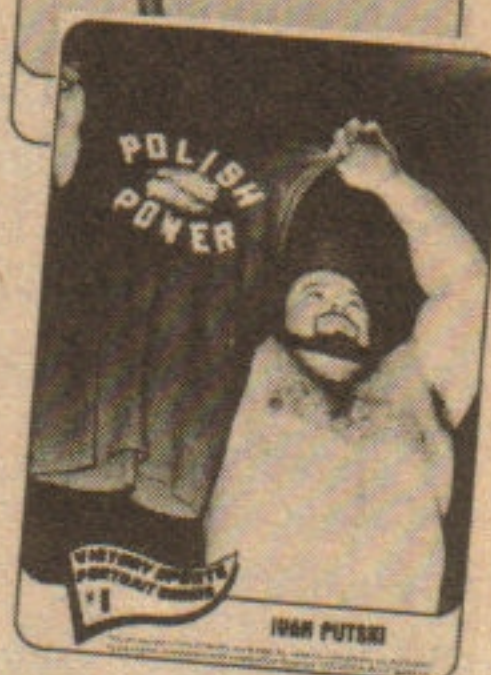
"You know how people talk and gossip. They'd say it was because we were feuding or something. I don't want to start anything. That's why I've been avoiding Rhodes and why he's been avoiding me.

"We respect each other too much."

I felt a great crime had been perpetrated. Two men with an obvious respectful attitude were being denied the opportunity to meet and shake hands. I pressed both of them into coming into the hallway and meeting.

Unless I'm mistaken, it was the start of a beautiful friendship. ☐

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BEHIND THE DRESSING ROOM DOOR

(Continued from Page 10)

into her blue eyes. I released her hand and spoke. "There's really nothing to be nervous about. Most of the wrestlers are really good to talk to. Even the rulebreakers are full of things to say and will generally cooperate."

"It sounds like you know what you're talking about," she said as she flashed a broad smile. (Ah, my chance to impress.)

"May I," I took the magazine from her lap, flipped to the staff box, and pointed out my name.

"Associate Editor. Wow!" she exclaimed. She looked at me inquisitively. "Gee, can I ask you a favor?"

"Name it," I said as my imagination began to run amok.

"Do you think you could sit with me during the matches. That way you can tell me what you know about the matches and the wrestlers. It'll make my article so much better."

"Sounds okay to me," I said coolly. "And then after the matches we can go out for a drink and we can discuss your angle."

"You'd do that for me?" she asked.

Why would my ears lie to me? They never have before? "It would be my pleasure," I replied, hiding my astonishment.

"Saks!" a deep, graveled voice called from down the corridor. I looked up and saw Greg Valentine marching double-time right to where we were sitting.

"Saks!" he screamed. "What kind of crap is your magazine printing. Your ratings are screwed up, buddy."

"Hey, Greg," I pleaded. "If you've got a gripe, I'd be happy to listen to you. But not now, okay?" I nodded in the direction of the young lady.

He had no sympathy for my situation. "How the hell can you rate me any lower than number one? I'm the best. *The* best! I'm number one and should be rated there."

He grabbed me by the collar and lifted me off the bench. He spoke softly, but only about an inch from my face. "I'm not going to remind you again."

He threw me back to the bench.

"Who was that," Elizabeth asked.

"That was Greg Valentine," I answered. "One of the toughest, meanest, most vicious . . ."

I stopped listing Valentine's attributes and looked at Elizabeth. She began to smile at me and we both started laughing. "Are you sure you want to do this article?" I asked. □



Greg Valentine confronts Associate Editor Stu Saks in the Garden dressing room as the beautiful Elizabeth looks on. "I'll bust that camera," Greg threatened.

THE INSIDER

(Continued from Page 12)

dous entertainment potential. However, Dusty has rejected all offers.

"I appreciate all those show biz folks comin' 'round and waving all kinds of money in my face" Rhodes replied, "but to be honest, I dance like a drunken sailor, I sing like a sick seal, and I never remember the punch lines to jokes. I'll stay with

wrestling, but maybe when I retire, I'll play the night club circuit."

INJURY REPORT

The neck of tough prelim wrestler FRANK WILLIAMS was broken by a Swede Hanson piledriver! The ugly incident was as senseless as the smile on Hanson's face as he watched Williams carted off on a stretcher. Several scientific stars have vowed to gain revenge for Williams. Rumors are circulating that Hanson is

traveling with two full-time bodyguards.

HARLEY RACE is suffering from a corn on the little toe of his right foot. While the corn is not considered a major injury, it bothers the NWA champion.

"It hurts me to put my boots on, and the annoying pain is starting to get to me mentally," said Race. Maybe Harley should remove the corn with the same razor blade he uses on his challengers!

That's all for this month. Catch you later. □

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TOMMY RICH

(Continued from Page 25)

gym was deserted. The usual clanks and groans heard from the weight room were nonexistent. It made for an eerie presence.

"I hope you've got some time," the lieutenant told Rich.

"It takes some people a long time to catch on. Others never do."

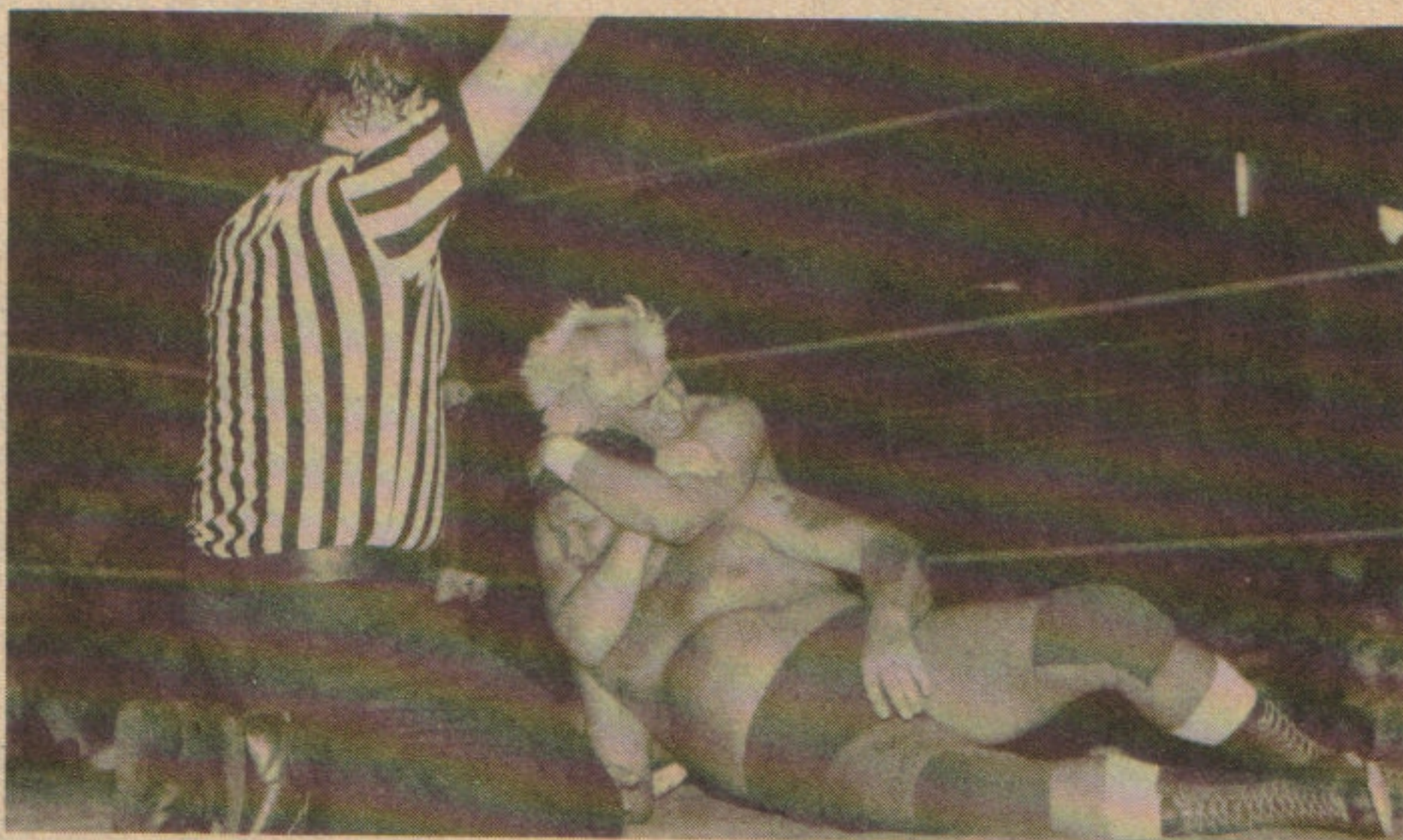
"I've got time," Rich said. "This is important to me."

The session took eight hours. Eight intensive hours with no breaks. "It's going to take about

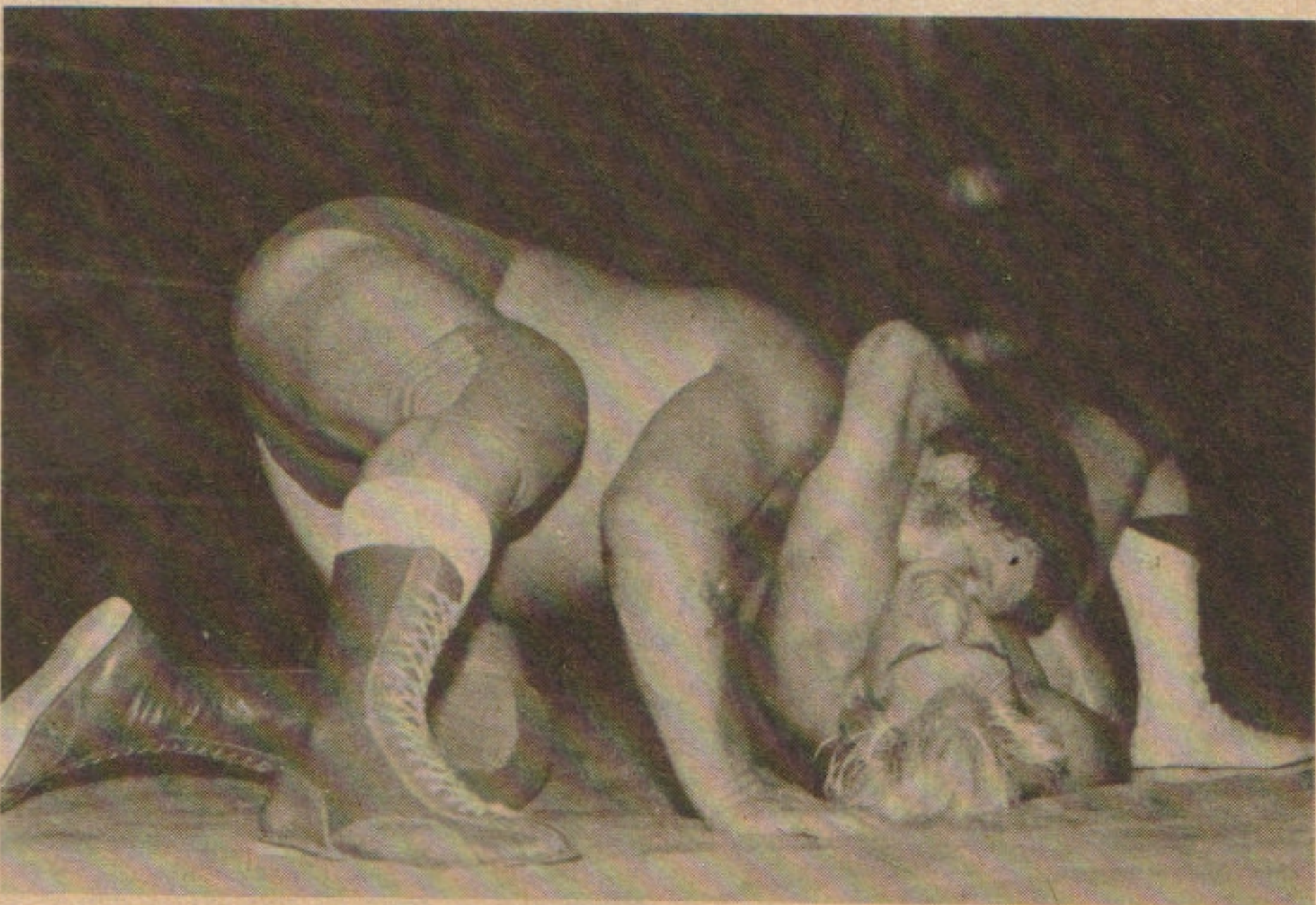
four more sessions before you've got it down pat," said the lieutenant. "But I must say, that you are doing very, very well."

"It's not me," said Rich, a smile crossing his face. "It's my teacher . . . thanks."

The lieutenant had given Rich a very valuable lesson. A lesson he has taught before, but only to a select few in the Marine Corps. A lesson that Rich thought could help take the NWA championship from



Tommy Rich learned his lesson well. His application of the Manchurian sleeper has NWA champion Race on the verge of unconsciousness (above). Race was saved by the bell. Prior to that action, Race wrestles Rich to the mat in an attempt to break a headlock (below).



Harley Race.

Rich had the basis for the application of the Manchurian sleeper hold that the lieutenant had learned while stationed outside of Manchuria. Although the lieutenant knew he was disobeying orders by passing the knowledge along to Rich, he felt the cause made it justifiable.

It is commonly known throughout the profession that Harley Race is susceptible to the sleeper hold. And with five lessons in hand, Rich would probably have the best sleeper in the sport.

Rich paid to keep Neil's Gym exclusively his for the next four days. On the fifth day, he stepped into the ring against the NWA champion. And he was ready.

"You want to know the truth," said a watery-eyed Tommy Rich after the match, "I was never more ready for anyone in my life.

"I really thought this would be the day. Just knowing that I'd have that sleeper put me on such a high. It gave me so much confidence. Everything went as I planned. Everything!"

Well, almost everything. Rich went on the offensive right at the bell, and lost only for brief moments. Rich whipped the champion into the ropes and backdropped him firmly to the canvas on the rebound. He lifted Race to his feet immediately and flung him into the ropes again. This time, Race was greeted by the Manchurian sleeper on the rebound. He would not escape the hold on his own.

He was saved by the bell. The time limit. Something Rich and his mentor did not consider. Race was going under when the time limit bell ended the match. It was just a matter of time before he was unconscious.

It seems to be just a matter of time before Rich is champion. □

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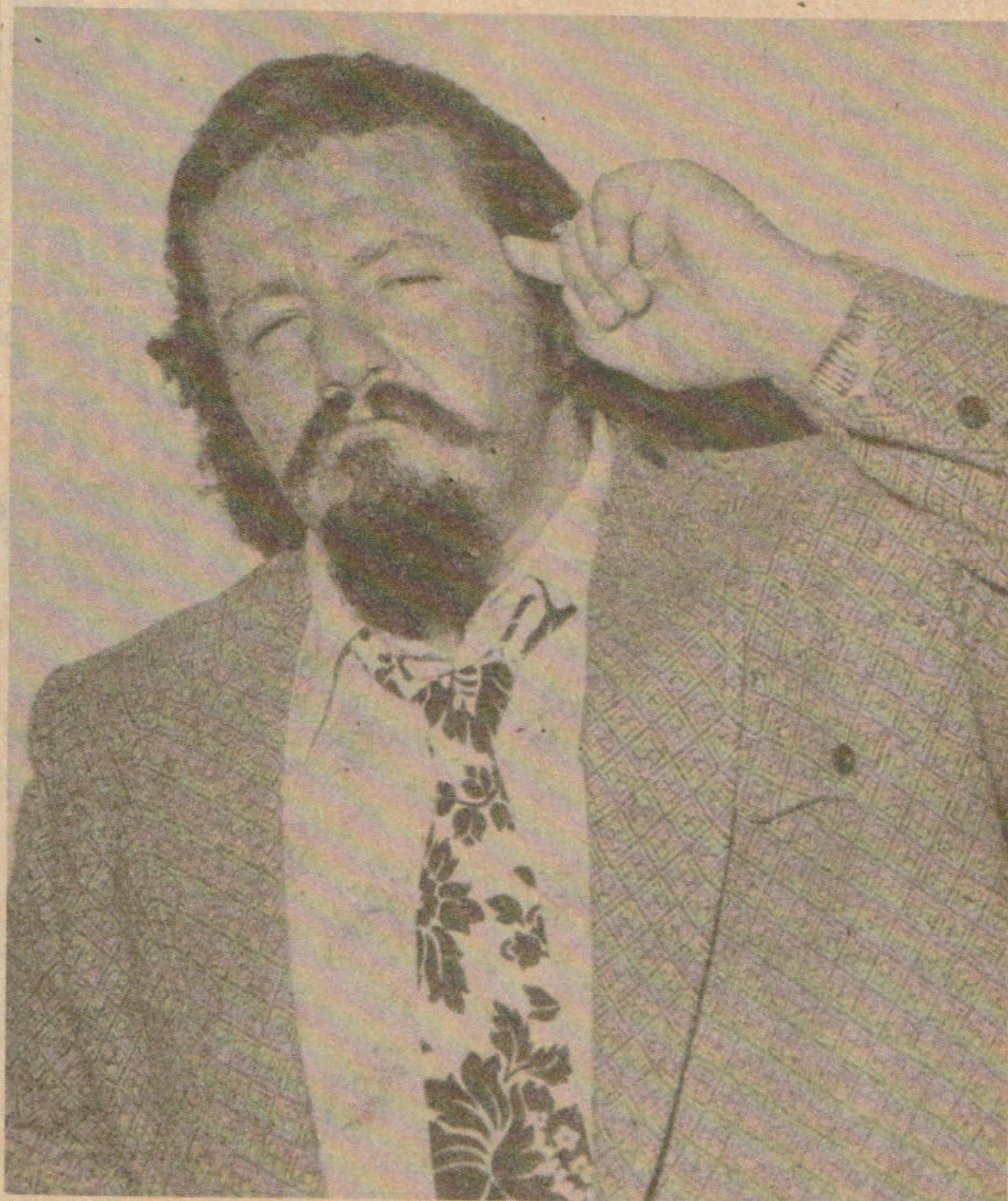
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BODYSLAMMS & PINFALLS

(Continued from Page 14)



Captain Lou Albano claims to be the brain behind the success of the Valiant brothers. According to Albano, the plans he devises for the champions are followed to perfection, but he is never given proper credit. Albano must be praised to feel secure.

As for the Valiants, the influence of Albano made them uneasy. As John admitted, "We're at our best with Albano. It shouldn't be like that. We should be at our best by ourselves. I don't like needing someone. I like Albano, but I don't like his influence. We'll tolerate him because he makes us better. Still, he'd better not forget we're the ones who really do the work."

Albano is used to giving

orders and having them followed. The Valiants never take orders. Jim Valiant and Albano had a special relationship that made the team of Jim and John Valiant work well under Albano. Neither John nor Jerry has that special chemistry with Albano. They're like businessmen who don't trust each other but are making too much money to go their separate ways.

If money was as important to the Valiants or

Albano as they claim, the partnership would go on forever. There may not be enough money in the world to keep them together. More important than riches is pride. Albano demands his wrestlers follow orders. The Valiants believe they make all final decisions. Never has success brought so little happiness.

Those who knew the situation weren't surprised when the flare-up occurred. Neither was there much surprise that it occurred in public. The Valiants and Albano needed to show everyone who held the power in their relationship. Unhappily, all it betrayed was that nobody could control the situation.

The Valiants and Albano are locked in a struggle nobody can win. The Valiants will never fully trust Albano. Lou will never tolerate his tactics being regarded as mere suggestions. They may stay together for a while longer, but they will never reach the heights of greatness that seemed to be theirs for the asking.

It's no use to think of what might have been. For the team to succeed, everyone involved would have to be very different people. If The Valiants could follow orders, chances are good they wouldn't be as great a manager.

For several matches, the Valiant brothers under Lou Albano achieved greatness. For that, all those who love wrestling should be grateful. ☐

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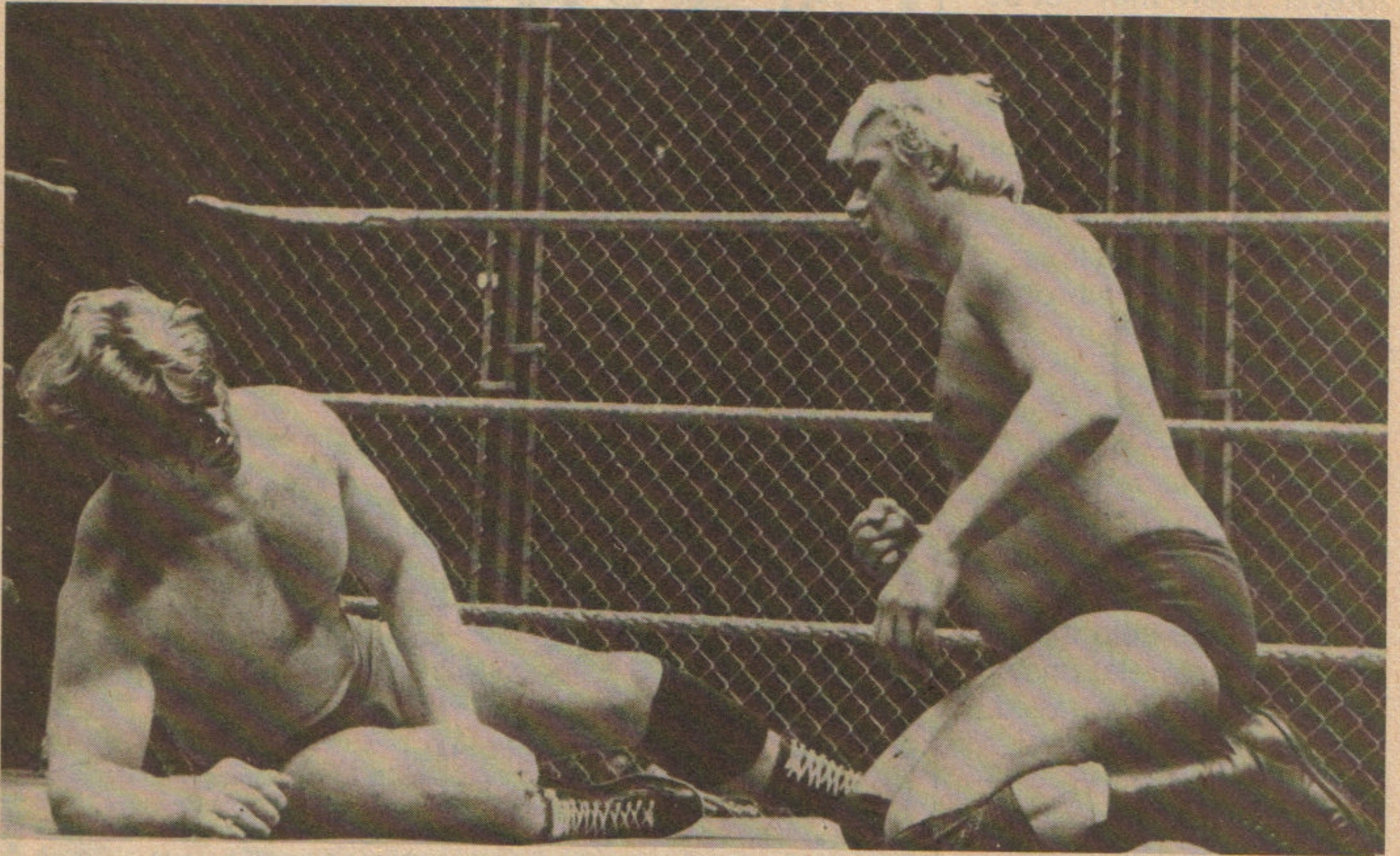
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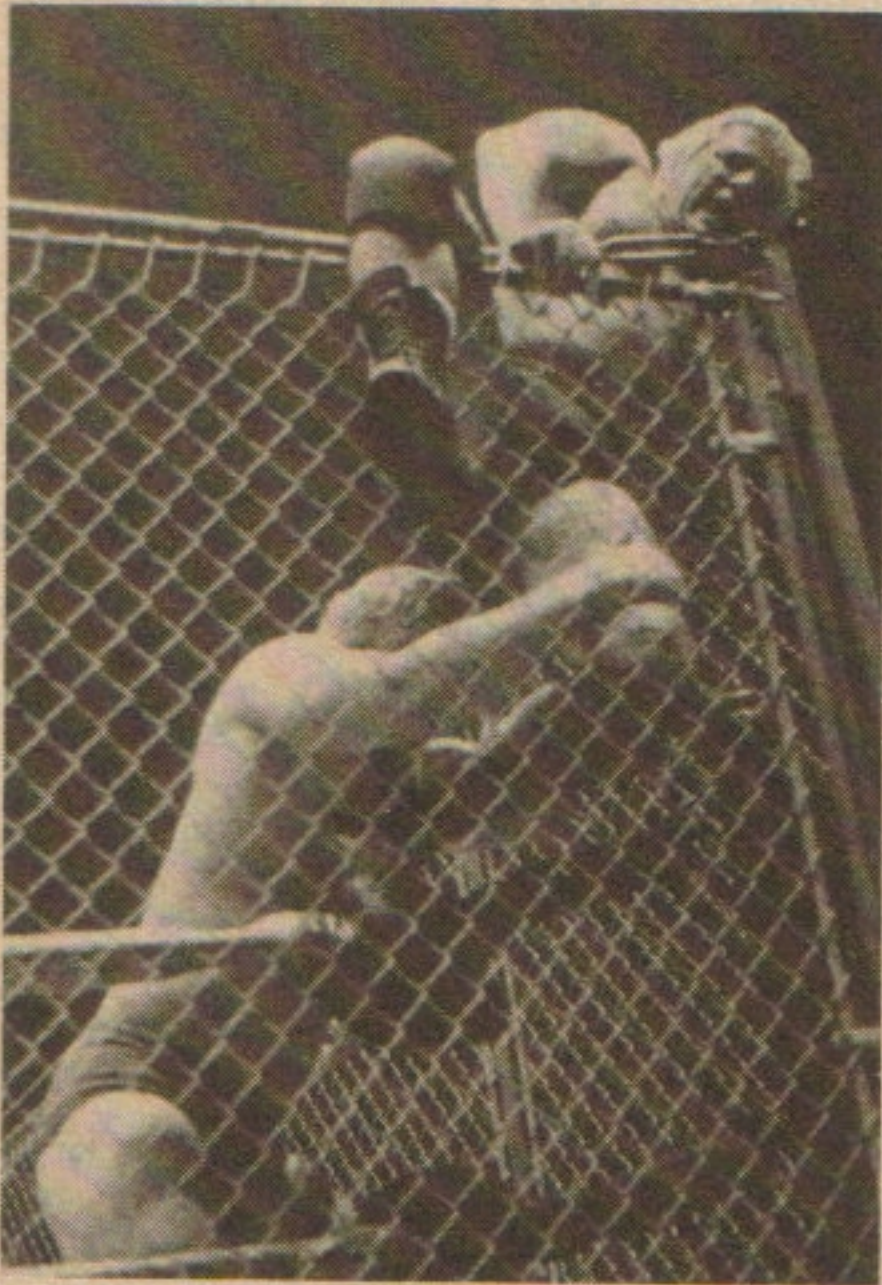
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Backlund vs. Patterson:

(Continued from Page 35)



Above: The bloody combatants slug it out on the mat. Below left: Patterson has one foot out of the ring but could get no further. Below right: If Patterson had connected solidly with his brass knuckles he would have escaped easily. Fortunately, Backlund saw the weapon in time.



like injury. The importance of keeping the belt makes everything else seem secondary."


Even Pat Patterson can't hide his worry when confronted with a cage match.

"Once the match starts," he said, "there's too much going on to worry. It's the waiting before that gets you. It's the memory of previous matches that starts eating away at your

nerves. You don't really feel the pain until the next day. Then you get the dizzy spells, aching muscles, and the pain of stitched flesh healing. It hurts so much you swear you'll never do it again. Then the opportunity comes and you take it. Maybe it's the kicks of seeing that clown Backlund covered with blood that makes me do it. Yeah, I want to see him covered with blood."

The night of the match, both men appeared nervous. They knew a cage match promises the possibility that a career would be over. It's too easy to slip off the top of the cage and topple to the concrete. A broken leg that never mends, muscle tears that never heal, even a cracked skull, all are risked in a cage match. Backlund has been in relatively few of these bouts and was not sure about his strategies. Patterson was a veteran of

(Continued on page 56)



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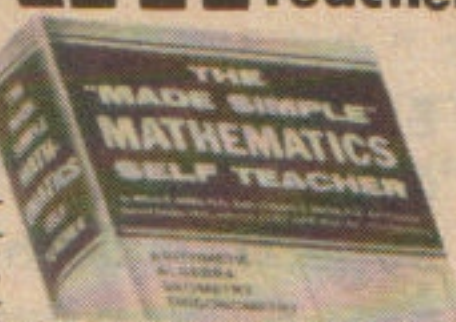
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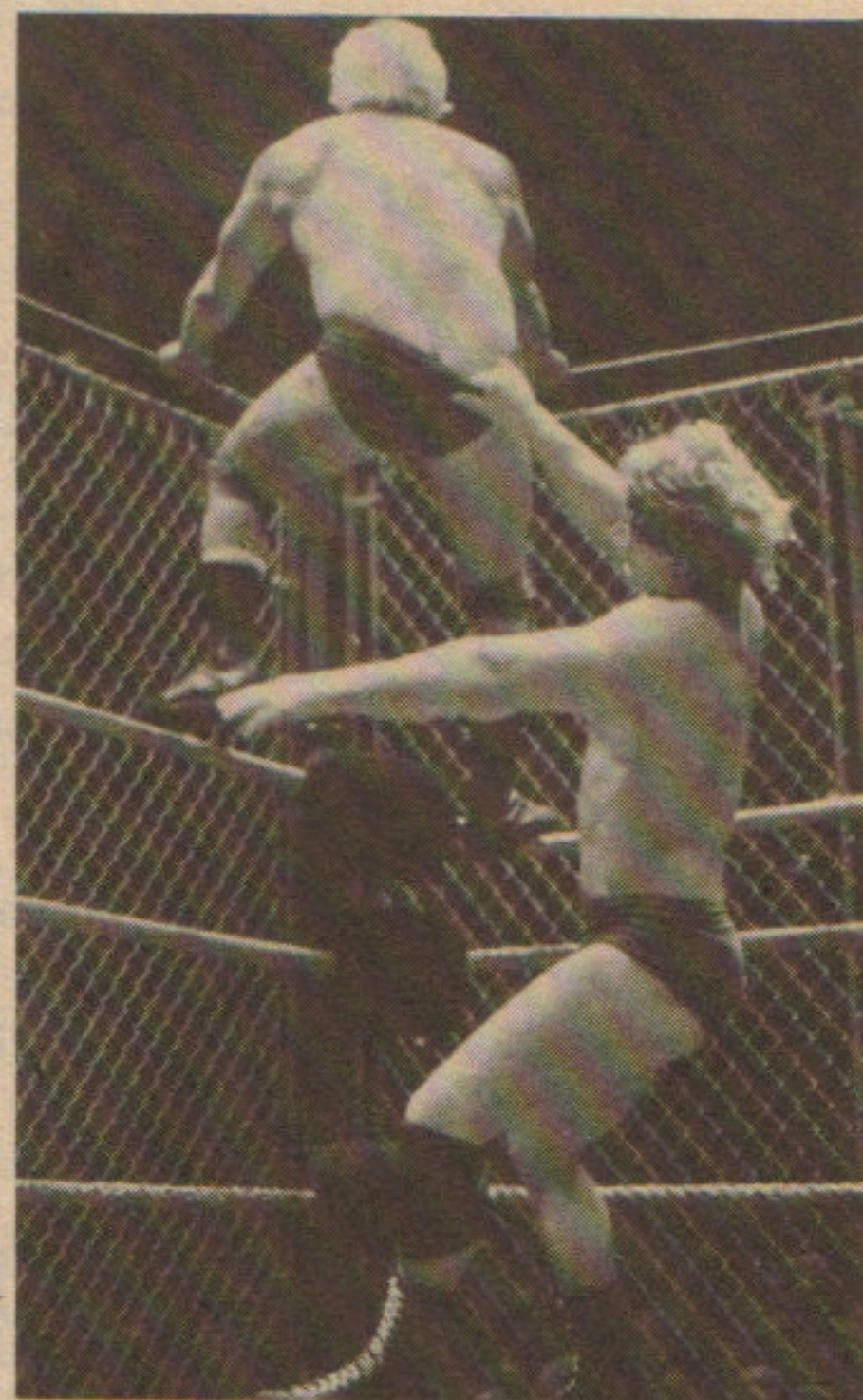
Backlund vs. Patterson:

(Continued from Page 54)

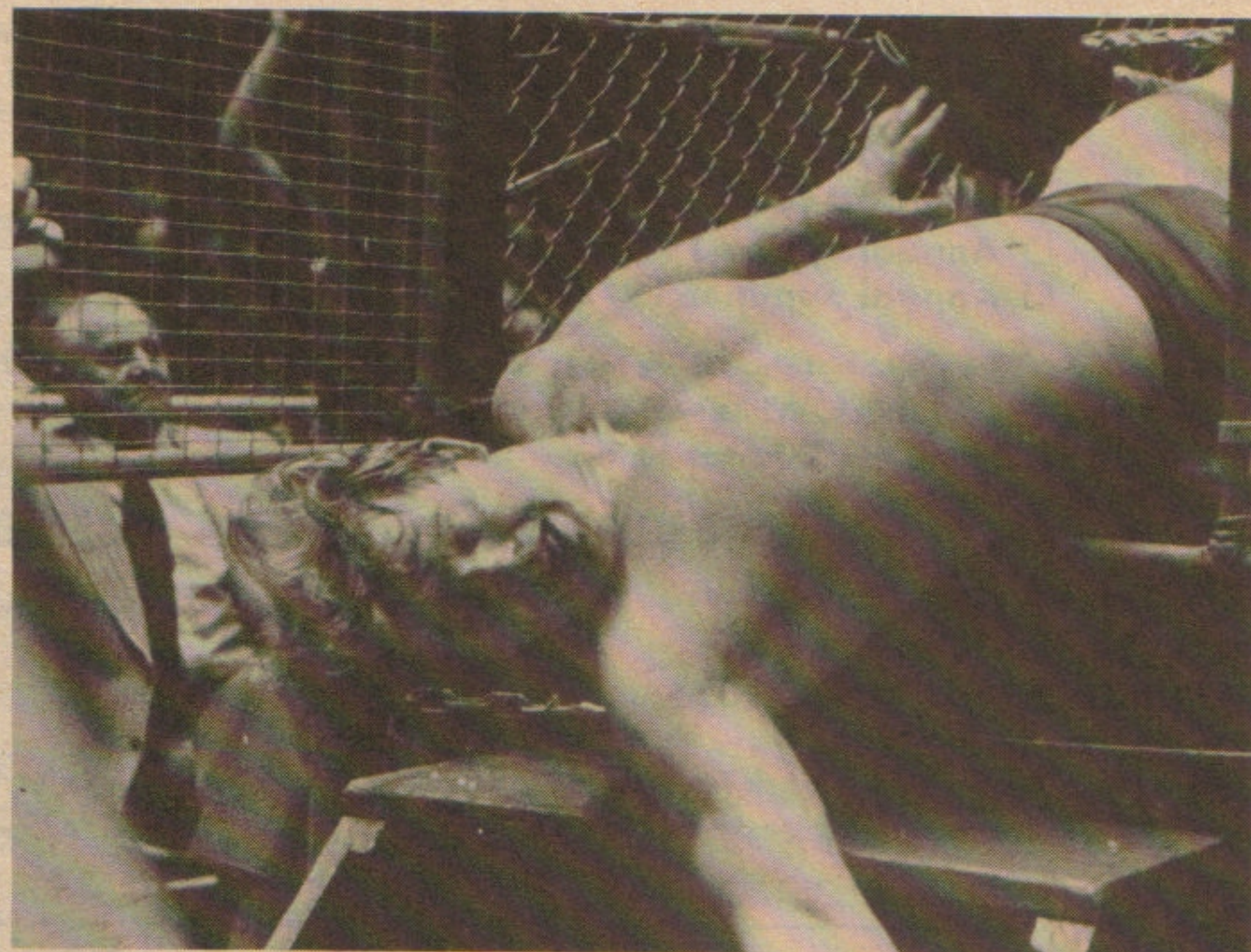
these bouts and knew exactly what to expect. That fear ate into his marrow. For different reasons, they were two very worried men.

The bell sounded. The two men stormed from their corners. The strategy of each was to end the bout as quickly as possible. There was less chance of serious injury that way.

There was the slap of flesh upon flesh as the two powerful athletes locked in battle. For the first few minutes, the action was so furious it was impossible to tell who was absorbing the most punishment. With increased ferocity, the brawlers hurled each other into the cage. The



Above: Patterson tries desperately to scale the cage, but the champion recovers in time to stop him the only way he could. Below: A bloody Backlund stumbled out of the opened gate, the winner and still champion.



metal cage shook from the force of their collision. Too soon, the ring began to be speckled with scarlet. Both men were bleeding profusely. Their faces were masks of gore.

When a man feels his own blood warm upon his body, a terror fills him. He can continue

his ordeal but can never shake that special terror. Even though bloodied, Backlund and Patterson battled undeterred. Yet, somehow, a spectator knew the terror had them.

Patterson was the first to try to escape his prison. A forearm smash sent Backlund reeling.

With a magnificent leap, Patterson bounded up the cage. He was grasping the top rail when Backlund managed to drag him down. The two bodies crashed upon the canvas.

Again and again, one man managed to climb the cage only to be brought down. As the battle wore on, only the strong could witness the carnage. Each man suffered a brutal pummeling. Their movements became sluggish, desperate, determined to end the agony quickly.

Then Patterson brought out his brass knuckles. Since there is no referee in a cage match, it was up to Backlund to disarm his foe. After a furious exchange where Backlund took armed punches to the ribcage and jaw, Bob managed to grab the knuckles away. His first instinct was to throw them away. Then, he stuck his fingers into the knuckles and started swinging. Patterson went reeling. A cruel grin spread across Bob's bloody face. Then he hurled the weapon from the ring.

Bloodier, in more pain, the two men struggled. Finally, Patterson was smashed to the far end of the ring. With Backlund's last bit of strength, the champion stumbled toward the cage door. The referee at ringside opened the door and Backlund tumbled out. The battered, weary, bloodied, bruised grappler was everything bad but beaten.

Backlund made his way back to the dressing room, the belt firmly around his waist. He was still champion. The crowd gave him a standing ovation.

Later, after the doctor stitched his wounds, Backlund lay back on the training table. Staring into space, he muttered, "The horror. The horror."

No one had to ask what he meant. □

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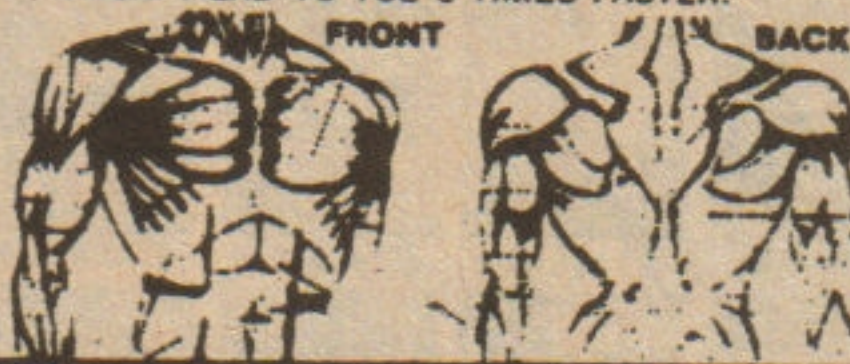
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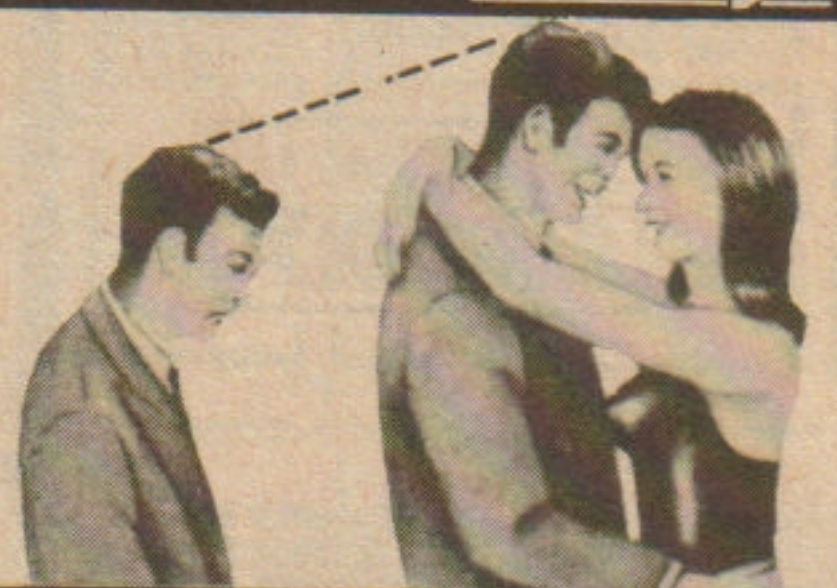
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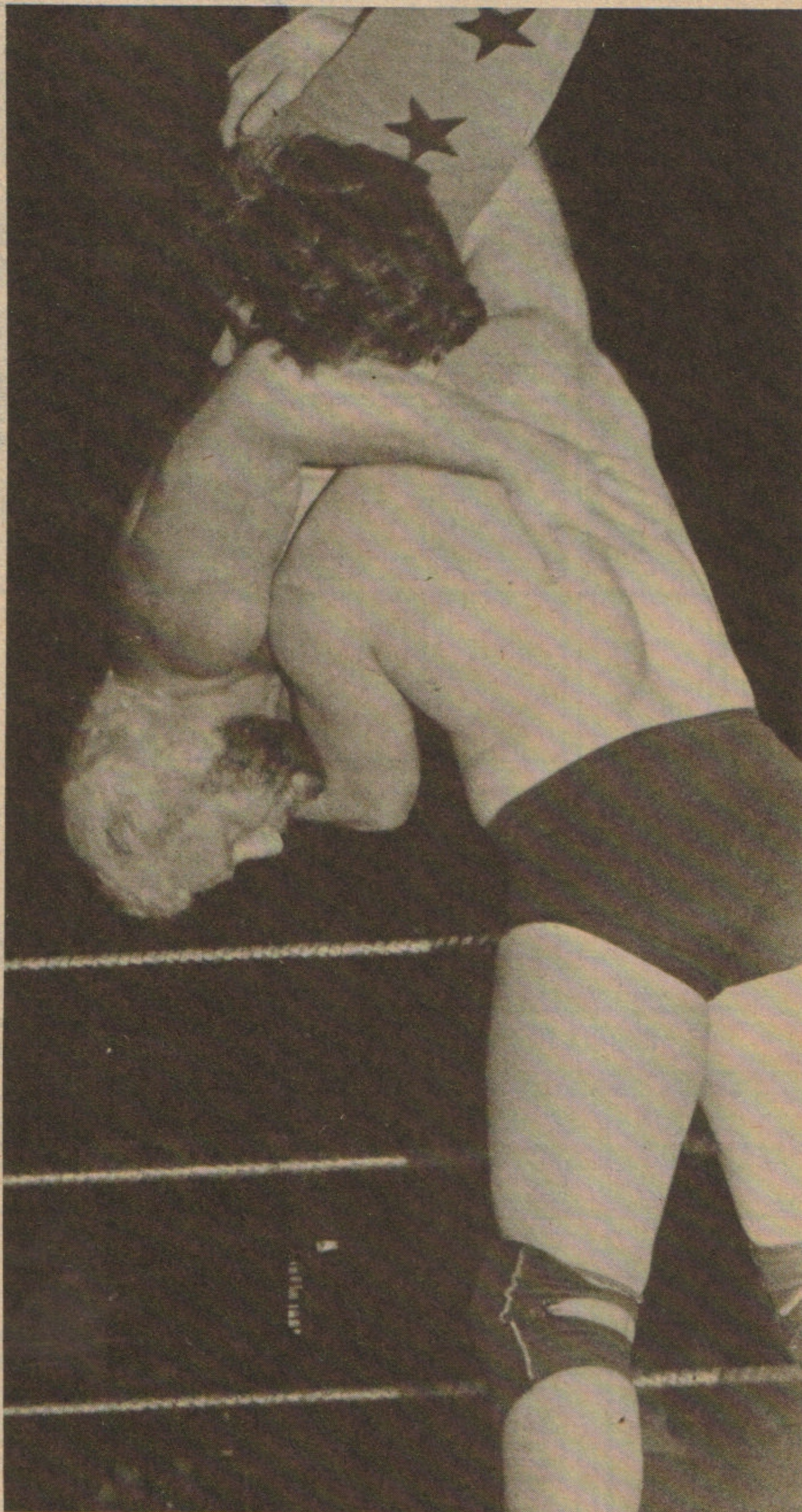
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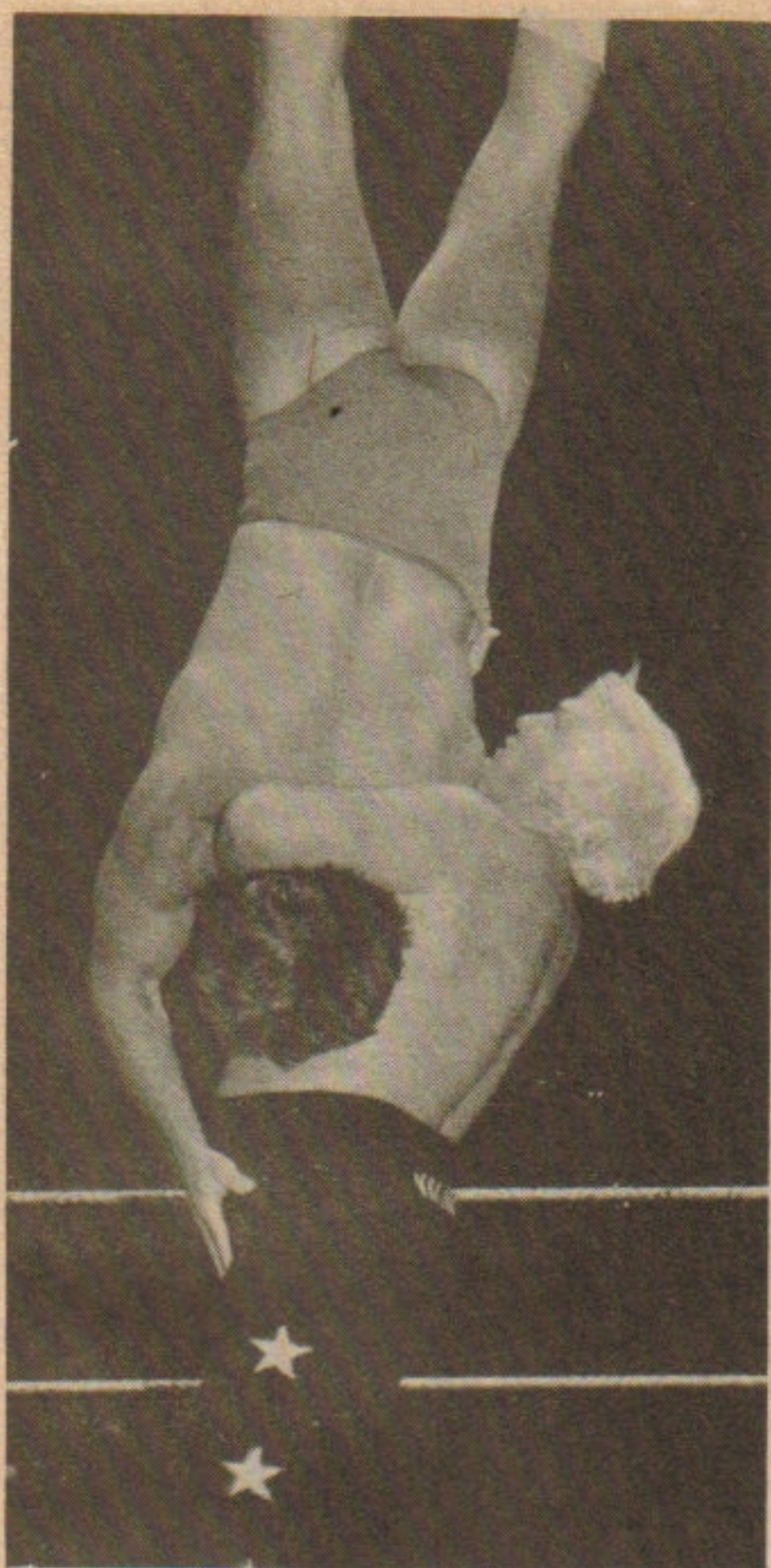
(Continued from Page 42)



DiBiase bodyslams John Valiant to the canvas. The Valiants claim they are upset that Albano's interference has gotten them disqualified on several occasions. Albano insists that his interference is necessary to rid the Valiants' opponents of foreign objects.

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Jerry Valiant suplexes Steve Travis to the mat. Very few wrestlers get up after experiencing that maneuver.

him to apologize. I gave him another chance. He still wouldn't.

I decked him. He was out cold for a couple of minutes. I think Howdy Doody Backlund revived him. I didn't turn around. I was too busy wiping the grease off my knuckles.

I defend my boys and they turn around and complain. I don't want to put them down, but when I let them go the first time, they had to work as plumber's assistants until I resurrected them.

The Valiants went down the tubes once. They can easily slide right back down the same hole a second time. All that stands between the Valiants and oblivion of my genius.

I have made the Valiants what they are today. They must listen and obey my orders, or I'll drop them and find someone else.

I wouldn't want to do that. They're good guys. As long as they listen to the Captain, of course. □

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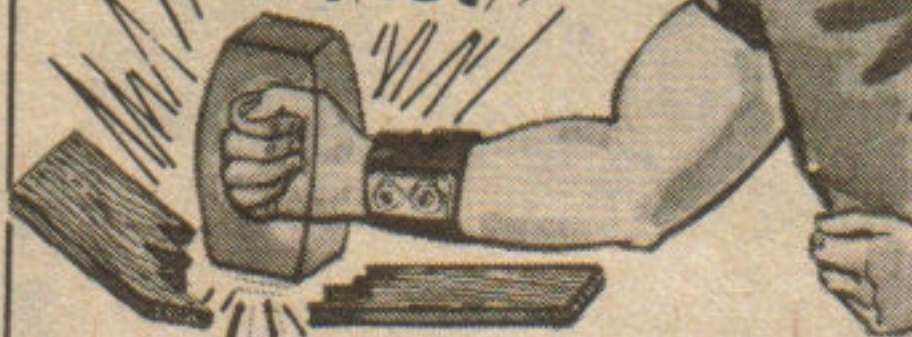


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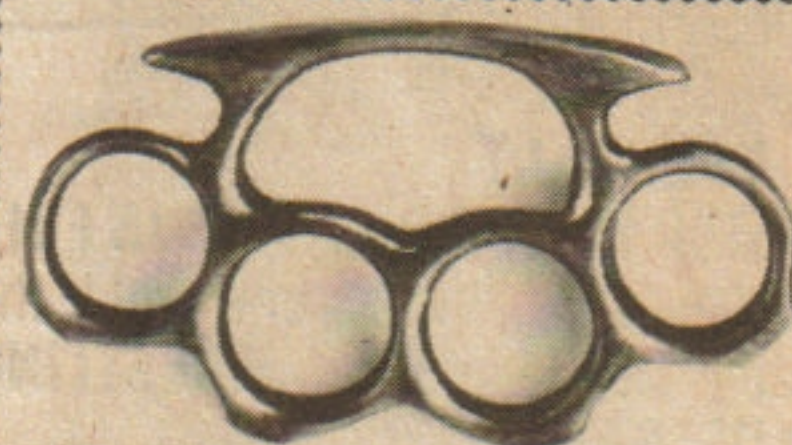
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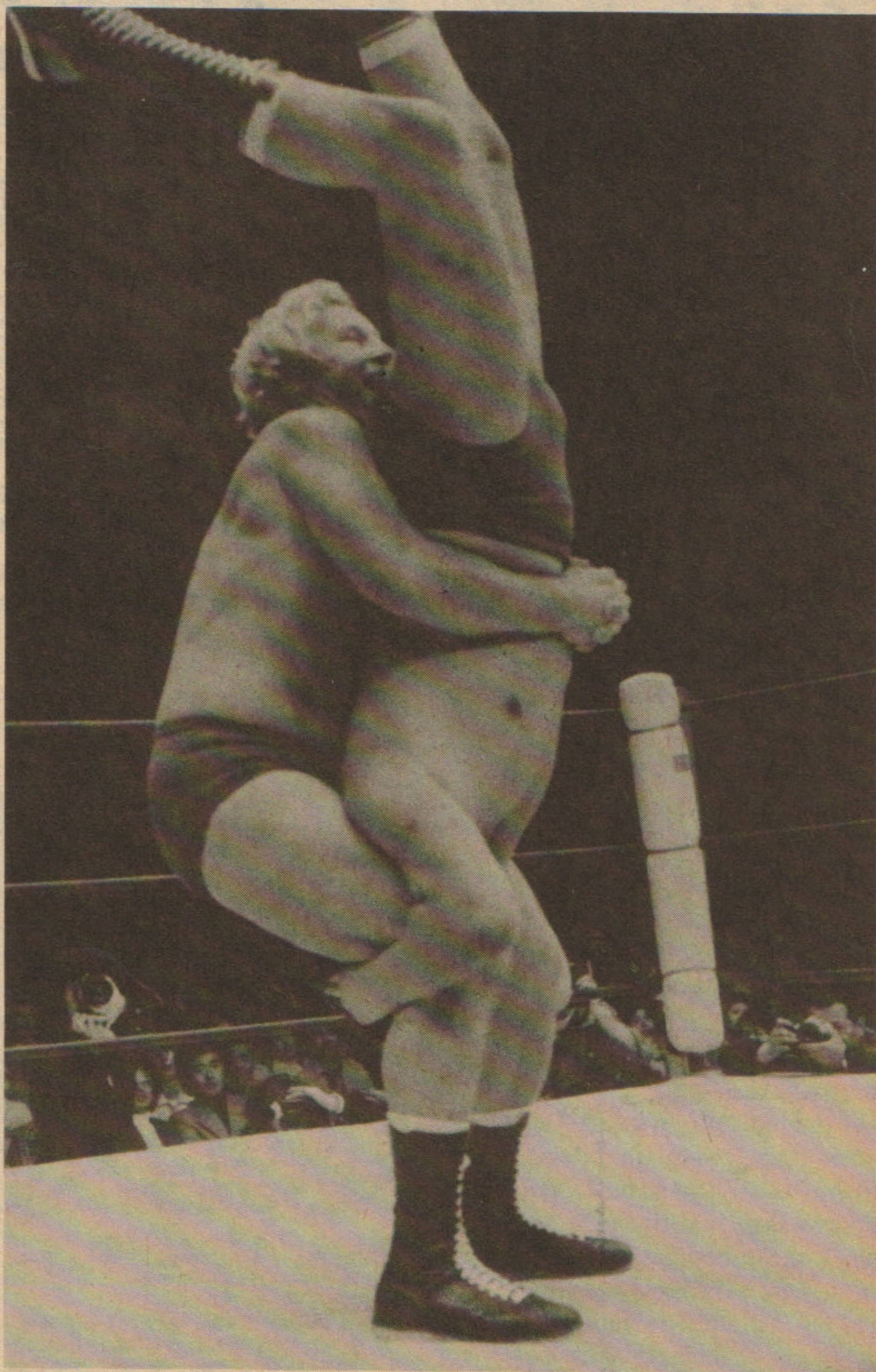
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ONE ON ONE

(Continued from Page 39)



Since splitting up with Bobby Heenan, Nick Bockwinkel has ventured out of the AWA area to defend his title. The terror of Bockwinkel's piledriver is now known in Japan. Bockwinkel has remained champion without Heenan's guidance, though Heenan is convinced he made Nick what he is today.

him through the ropes.

NB: At least there's some competition down there.

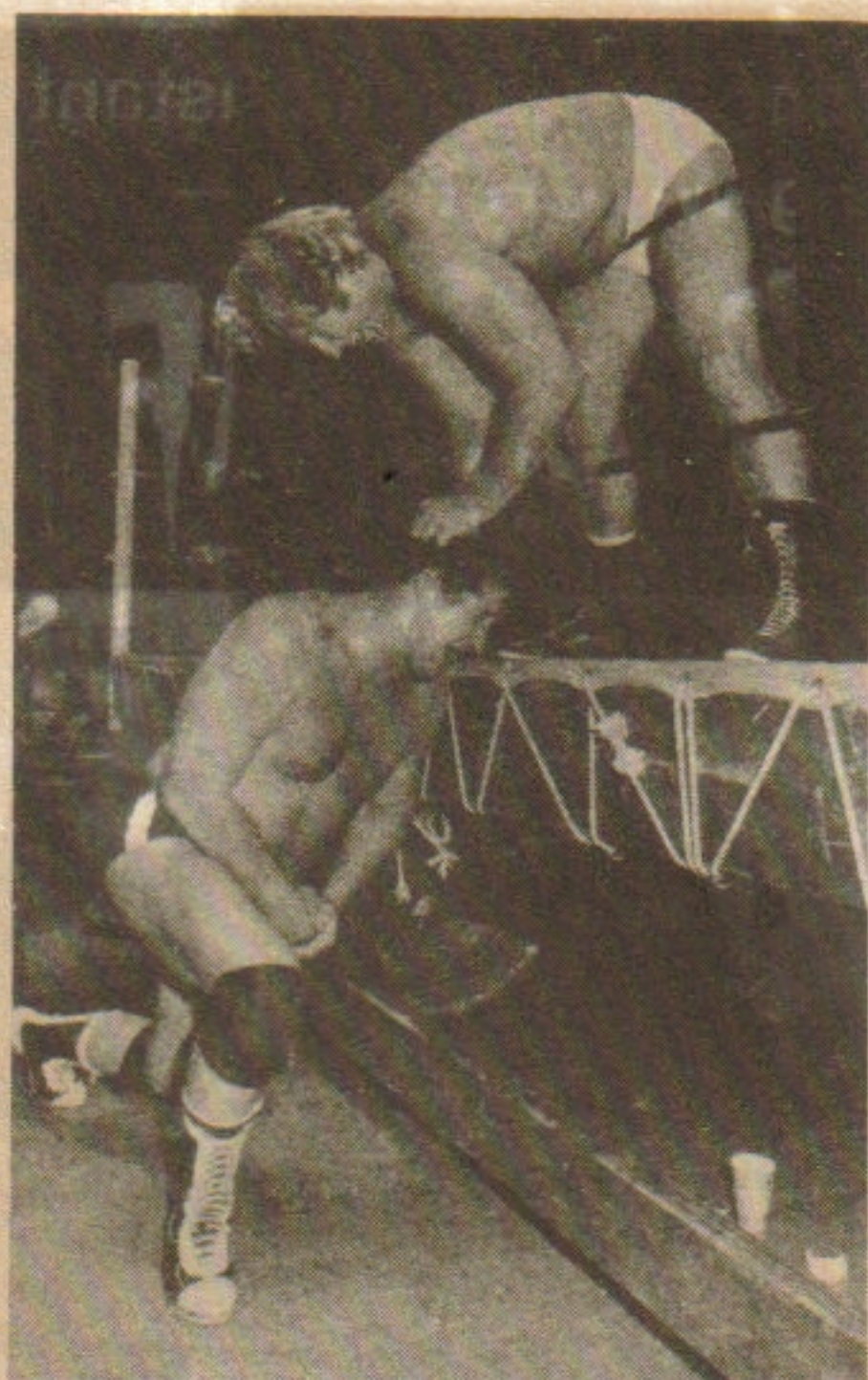
BH: Very little.

NB: Some is better than nothing. I'm bored out of my skull. I have to travel down to

Texas and to Memphis to look for good matches. Even then, my foes are less than adequate.

BH: We always found top-notch people.

NB: They're falling apart. I'm a



In Houston, Bockwinkel reaches over the ropes to slam Terry Funk's head into the edge of the ring. Bockwinkel claims there is a lack of competition in the AWA.

one-man alliance, I think.

BH: I tell you, some of the people down here remind me a little of you.

NB: Like?

BH: Oh, Lanza has that same inner drive and toughness.

NB: Lanza? You comparing me with Lanza?

BH: Somewhat.

NB: Hey, Lanza's my friend, but...

BH: Hey, take it easy, Nick. It was a compliment.

NB: Yeah, yeah.

BH: Need any advice before I leave?

NB: I'm doing just fine on my own, Bobby.

BH: I heard you were under a lot of pressure.

NB: Who told you?

BH: Just heard, that's all.

NB: If I were under all this pressure, you think I'd be invading every territory in the nation?

BH: No, I...

NB: I am the undisputed greatest champion who ever lived.

BH: We've done great.

NB: Yeah, I sure have. ☐

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